



15 minutes with the Sugababes

Benguet's unclaimed mummies



FPJ sports program targets Olympic gold

GMA gave Erap golf cart for his weak knees

Iraqis sign interim Constitution

Funnyman Rudy Manlapaz dies; 72



US relents, allows sister of ailing vet to go to US

NEW ORLEANS—US authorities have relented and agreed to allow a sister of a Filipino-American military veteran suffering from leukemia to travel from the Philippines to the United States to donate stem cells that may save his life.

Philip Bongawil, a 57-year-old US Navy veteran, was "ecstatic" after being told the US RELENTS/A21

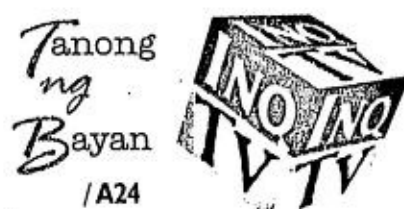
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Wednesday, March 10, 2004 ★★ 52 pages / 4 sections / vol. 19 / no. 93

P18

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Mas mabait na GMA, gusto ba ng mga Erap loyalists?

NGAYONG ALAS-10 NG GABI

FPJ, businessmen discuss 100-day agenda

He wants time to study 'jueteng,' pork proposals

By Christine O. Avendaño

OPPOSITION standard-bearer Fernando Poe Jr. yesterday told business leaders that he needed to further study their proposals to adopt a moratorium on strikes, to legalize the illegal numbers game "jueteng" and to cut by half the pork barrel of the members of Congress.

Poe made known his positions on these issues at a two-hour closed-door meeting with the convenors of the Presidential Business Agenda for the First 100 Days at the Shangri-La Hotel in Makati.

The business agenda was put together by Jose T. Pardo, former finance secretary; Washington Sycip,

founder of SGV & Co.; Manuel Pangilinan, chair of the Philippine Long Distance Co.; Ramon Ang, president of San Miguel Corp.; and Enrique Razon, president of International Container Terminal Services Inc.

The agenda identifies six main concerns—the widening budget deficit, the growing foreign debt, deteriorating competitiveness of the country, waning investor confidence, widespread poverty and prevalent public cynicism.

"FPJ thanked them for their initiative and for their offer of help to government, and he's looking forward to working with them if and when he wins the presidency in May 2004,"

said Sorsogon Rep. Francis Escudero, who was directed by Poe to answer media queries on the outcome of the meeting.

Escudero described the meeting as a "light exchange of ideas between" Poe and the business leaders.

Asked whether Poe, a high school dropout, was able to articulate his positions on the issues, the congressman replied in the affirmative, "especially with respect to the congruence of his platform with that of the 100 Days agenda."

Escudero said Poe had reservations on the proposal for a strike moratorium because he would "like to be able to maintain a balance between the

FPJ/A21



YOU GOTTA have heart. That's what matters, not brains, Fernando Poe Jr. reminds audience at UP's Bahay Alumni during the launch of the Kilos para sa Bagong Umaga. (Story on Page A5)

Estrada defends GMA

Business wants more students to finish school

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

IN THE Philippines, almost all 7-year-olds enter elementary school, but fewer than seven of every 10 will finish grade school. Just five will get a high school diploma and only one will get a college degree.

A group of foundations wants to improve the numbers.

"We would like to see eight out of 10 students graduating from elementary, maintain (at five) or even improve to six students who will graduate from high school, and finally see at least three students get a college or technical vocational diploma," said Roberto E. Aboitiz, main convenor of the Coalition for Better Education (CBE).

Aboitiz told the INQUIRER that the CBE was different from other private sector-led programs seeking to uplift education because it brought together groups from all sectors to work toward a common goal.

Fears that access to quality education would deteriorate further had prompted the Philippine Business for Social Progress, the Aboitiz Group Foundation Inc. and the Ramon Aboitiz Foundation Inc. to come together in 2001 to draw up an integrated approach to provide a better education for all through the BUSINESS/A8



SHOW BIZ meets Big Biz: Presidential candidate Poe meets with PLDT chair Manny Pangilinan, Jose Pardo and other top executives of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry to discuss their proposal for a Presidential Business Agenda in the First 100 Days of the elected president.

Criminal raps filed vs President

By Armand N. Nocum and Juliet Labog-Javellana

MAKING good their threat, lawyers and activists yesterday filed a criminal complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo et al. in connection with the controversial arrangement allowing ousted President Joseph Estrada to spend time outside Camp Capinpin without the say-so of the Sandiganbayan.

The move drew protest from Estrada, who phoned the INQUIRER to say he saw nothing wrong in spending time at his rest house across from the camp. "Ano ba yung visit sa rest house? Is that a crime?" he said.

But the complainants told reporters that the case could be upgraded to an impeachment complaint should Ms Macapagal win the May election.

From Camp Capinpin, Estrada came to the defense of his successor: "Being compassionate is not a crime. How can she be impeached?"

He also expressed pity for Supt. Melchor Ysulat, head of the sacked 15-man unit assigned to guard him.

"Put all the blame on me," the ousted President said. "Kawawa naman yun. For being compassionate, he is now facing administrative charges. I'm willing to face all the punishment for the offense they are imputing to Ysulat and his men."

Charged along with Ms Macapagal were Philippine National Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane, Housing Secretary Michael Defensor, Chief Supt. Roland Sacramento of the Police Security and Protection Office, and a number of John Does and Jane Does, ESTRADA/A10

Erap very generous, says ex-jailer

By Christian V. Esguerra

HOW DID Joseph Estrada manage to leave Camp Capinpin to entertain guests at his rest house on his 15-hectare vacation estate?

His security escorts at the military camp in Tanay, Rizal, may have been

so disarmed by his generosity that they unwittingly allowed him to break the rules, according to an officer in the know.

"Masyado siyang galante (He's very generous)," the officer, who was once assigned to guard the jailed ex-President, told the INQUIRER yesterday. And

probably as a result, the officer said, Estrada endeared himself to his guards.

There were instances when Estrada gave away food and gifts to his security escorts. "It's not that he was trying to bribe anyone. I think it's just

ERAP/A10

RP bishops lavish praise on Gibson's 'Passion'

By Blanche S. Rivera

THEY MAY not be diehard Mel Gibson fans, but his latest film has them hooked.

Local Catholic clergymen who viewed a special screening of the actor-director's controversial "The Passion of the Christ" at a Makati cinema on Monday were singing praises for the film they described as the most accurate portrayal of the last 12 hours of Jesus Christ's life.

Officials of the influential Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines joined 150 bishops, priests and heads of religious congregations and Catholic schools flown in for the special

screening at the Glorietta 4 Cinema 6, brushed aside criticisms that the movie was anti-Semitic and too violent for public viewing.

"It is a violent expression of evil and a powerful expression of the love of God," said Manila Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales after watching the two-and-a-half-hour movie. "I want every Filipino to watch this film because there is a promise here, there is meaning. Maybe God is trying to tell us something," he said.

Rosales said the anti-Semitism perception could be raised only by people who merely want to create an issue, "those who could

RP BISHOPS/A7



Ping wearing, seeing red; mad at administration

By Norman Bordadora

BOGO, Cebu—It's not because he has nothing else to wear. Nor does he badly need a fashion makeover.

Opposition candidate Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson always wears a red and yellow checkered shirt because he's angry.

"I'm angry at crime and corruption," Lacson said, when asked why he was always in red.

On Monday, Lacson addressed a formal meeting of the Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry wearing neither

PING/A22



THE DEPTH of Mel Gibson's Biblical knowledge shines through, say Filipino bishops of the world's most-talked-about film in recent years, which had a special screening on Monday night.

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of Luzon will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers mostly over eastern section.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA PDI RESEARCH/03/10/04

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONT PAGE

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Lasag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legaspi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

10 die as pump boat sinks

By Alcuin Papa, Manila, and Franklin M. Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau

AT LEAST 10 people, mostly children, were killed while two others were missing after the pump boat they were riding in capsized in the waters off Barangay Magsaysay, Placer, Surigao del Norte on Sunday.

Reports from the military Office of Civil Defense (OCD) identified the fatalities as Miguel Enso, 43; Susan Manliguez, 36; Cresel Enso, 15; Chermen Manliguez, 9; Zara Enso, 8; Susan Enso, 3; Michael Enso, 3; In-day Enso, 1; Sechen Manliguez, 9 months, and Allen Manliguez, age unknown.

Missing were Jean Manliguez, 7, and Junjun Enso, 4. Rescuers were able to save four others but they were not identified.

The office of Placer Mayor Donald Villejo, however, said 11 people had died, one was missing and one had been rescued, although it did not release any names.

Patricelle Loon of the mayor's staff said the victims were on their way home to Burongkot Island in nearby Taganaan town when strong winds battered the wooden boat at around 8:30 Sunday evening.

Reports said one of the small craft's outriggers broke, causing it to capsize.

Fishermen and rescuers rushed to the scene. Elements of the 20th Infantry Battalion and the 8th Infantry Division were still conducting search and rescue operations for the missing passengers.

"Aside from the strong winds, investigation revealed that it was overloaded,"

she told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

"The children died because they didn't how to swim," she added.

Loon said the municipal government had extended assistance to the victims' families.

The Associated Press quoting military spokesman Lt. Col. Daniel Lucero said 10 people had died, two were missing, and five had been rescued. It said the accident was not reported until Tuesday.

Lucero confirmed the boat's outrigger broke, causing the vessel to capsize.

With an AP report

Today is last day for GMA to name new SC justice

By Philip C. Tubeza

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has only until today to appoint a new Supreme Court justice but Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, who is a member of the body that screens the candidates for the judiciary, said he was against the idea of submitting a new list of nominees to Malacañang.

Pangilinan, a member of the Judicial and Bar Council that vets candidates for the high court vacancy, said he would oppose any move to submit a new list when the eight-member JBC convenes today.

"The JBC has complied with our mandate to submit nominees to Malacañang. There is nothing more for the JBC to do. Malacañang has the list and should choose from among the names in the list," he said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo said on Monday that she was waiting for the JBC to submit a second list of nominees after she apparently withdrew the Feb. 11 appointment of Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Minita Chico-Nazario to the SC.

A JBC source said the body would take up today the President's decision to withdraw Nazario's appointment. The subject has been included in the supplemental agenda of today's meeting, the source said, adding that the JBC would decide whether to submit again the old list of nominees or to submit a new one.

Under the Constitution, the President only has until today to fill the SC vacancy created by the retirement last November of Justice Josue Bellosillo.

Appointments ban

Retired SC Justice and INQUIRER columnist Isagani Cruz wrote last Sunday that the Constitution prohibited the President from making appointments two months before a presidential election and "up to the end of her term."

With the elections scheduled for May 10, the ban against appointments would start tomorrow.

If the President fails to make the deadline, the SC vacancy cannot be filled until the beginning of the term of the next President on June 30.

At the high court, Luzviminda Puno, the clerk of court, said the President's failure to fill the vacancy in the tribunal within the constitutionally mandated 90 days was unprecedented.

"This has never happened before, not with the Supreme Court," said Puno, who is also the JBC secretary.

She said she was "sure" someone would bring up the issue before the Supreme Court.

The President told the INQUIRER last week that "other Presidents have also not met the deadline" in filling vacancies in the high court and that she had merely deferred Nazario's appointment. She apparently changed her mind about it.

Besides Nazario, the other nominees in the list that the JBC sent to Malacañang on Jan. 28 included SC court administrator Presbitero Velasco Jr., Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo, Court of Appeals Presiding Justice Cancio Garcia, and University of the Philippines law professor Ruben Balane.

Last week, Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr., the JBC chair, said that his office had yet to receive any appointment from Malacañang for the SC vacancy.

Palace urges MILF to sever terrorist ties

MALACAÑANG is urging the Moro Islamic Liberation Front to live up to its commitment to cut its ties with terrorists and support the governments anti-terrorism campaign.

This was revealed by presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye who said that the government's anti-terrorism drive would not be "compromised" to any degree by the peace negotiations between the government and the MILF.

Bunye said the MILF has long renounced terrorism and that the government was banking on their vow to support the anti-terrorism drive. He said both sides consider these as "indispensable to the pursuit of long-lasting peace."

The Palace's reminder came amid reports that the 6 Indonesian Jemaah Islamiya (JI) suspects caught in Malaysia while in transit from Mindanao to Sabah were trained by the MILF.

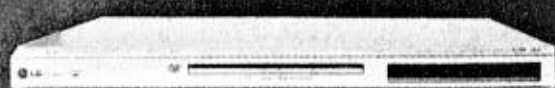
The President had earlier cited the arrest of the JI suspects as proof that foreign terrorists who have used the Philippines as a hideout have begun to move out and seek refuge in other countries.

"There are indications that foreign terrorists who once sought refuge here have already started to leave the country with the strict anti-terrorism drive we have been implementing," said Ms Macapagal in a statement.

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No plate, no travel starting today

By Alcuin Papa

IT'S all systems go for the implementation of the "no plate no travel" policy today, the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force (Naktf) said yesterday.

The representatives of the Land Transportation Office (LTO), the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA), the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO), the Traffic Management Group (TMG), Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines (CAMPI) and the Philippine Automotive Association (PAA) met with Naktf chief Angelo Reyes in Camp Aguinaldo to flesh out the guidelines of the policy, the Naktf said.

Reyes said vehicles without license plates and do not have the necessary documentation like the owner's certificate of registration and official receipt will be impounded. Motorcycles are exempted from this policy.

Warning

Car owners using vehicles with conduction stickers in lieu of license plates but possess the original customer's copy of the Sales Invoice or Delivery Receipt of the vehicle will be given a warning to complete the registration of the vehicle.

Vehicles already issued license plates but whose owners still continue to use conduction stickers shall be fined.

Elements of the Naktf will also check documents of drivers moving vehicles from dealer to dealer, dealer to showroom, dealer to warehouse and dealer to factory. These documents include gate passes, driver's licenses and

authorized company IDs.

Reyes said the "no plate no travel" policy is one way of solving

crimes, particularly kidnapping. The policy is aimed at vehicles without license

plates, vehicles with conduction stickers, government vehicles without plates, vehicles with fake plates,

illegally transferred plates and unauthorized plates and expired commemorative plates.



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Fariñas brod to challenge Bongbong in Ilocos

LAOAG CITY—Saying Ilocanos deserve better than an absentee governor, outgoing Laoag Mayor Roger Fariñas has announced that he is challenging Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. for the top provincial post on May 10.

"After consulting with my wife (Asuncion Fariñas), I have finally decided to run as governor," Fariñas said over radio station dzJC on Monday night.

Fariñas, older brother of former Ilocos Norte Rep. Rodolfo Fariñas, is expected to file his candidacy on March 24, a day before the official campaign period for local candidates begins. Rep. Fariñas is Marcos' former political ally.

It is not clear, however, how Fariñas can still file his candidacy after his son, Raffy, who was fielded for the gubernatorial post, withdrew from the race last January.

"There is no turning back once I have made a decision," Fariñas said.

The Marcos camp received the news

about Fariñas' decision as early as last Saturday when Marcos' wife, lawyer Louise Araneta, supposedly received a text message about it.

"We immediately verified the information and all family members are aware of Fariñas' declaration," said Lito Gorospe, Marcos' spokesman.

Asked how Marcos received the information, Gorospe said: "He (Marcos) merely said, 'Good, good.'"

Gorospe said Fariñas' announcement to run for the gubernatorial post was unexpected. Marcos would have run for his third and final term unopposed.

"It pains me to see that we voted him (Marcos) as governor but somebody else is running the affairs of the provincial government," Fariñas said when asked what made him decide to challenge Marcos.

He said people hardly see Marcos in his office as he would be either absent or fail to spend the whole day working at the provincial capitol.



MARCOS JR.

"He should be there always to listen to the problems of the people. But when people go to his office, either he is out or he makes them wait forever," Fariñas said.

The mayor said he thought long and hard to declare his candidacy because

challenging Marcos in the elections is like the Biblical David facing Goliath.

"I leave it to the people to decide. It is up to them if they want the same kind of governance that they have right now," he said.

"Can you show anything in the rural areas if there is anything that the province (under Marcos) did in the last six years? Nothing," he said.

Fariñas said Ilocanos voted Marcos into office out of respect for the late President Ferdinand Marcos.

"Ilocanos adored the late President that is why they treated his children with respect. But the children do not look after us. They act like the sons of a king," the mayor said.

Should Fariñas pursue his candidacy, he would be the only second candidate next to Ilocos Norte Rep. Roque Ablan Jr. who had challenged Marcos in the gubernatorial post. Ablan ran and lost against Marcos in 1998.

Cristina Arzadon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Pangasinan poll exec shot dead

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan—A Commission on Elections officer of Natividad town was shot and killed on Tuesday afternoon in front of his office.

Police said Rodolfo Ruiz, 51, the town's election registrar, was alighting from his motorcycle at past 2 p.m. when two armed men aboard another motorcycle shot him.

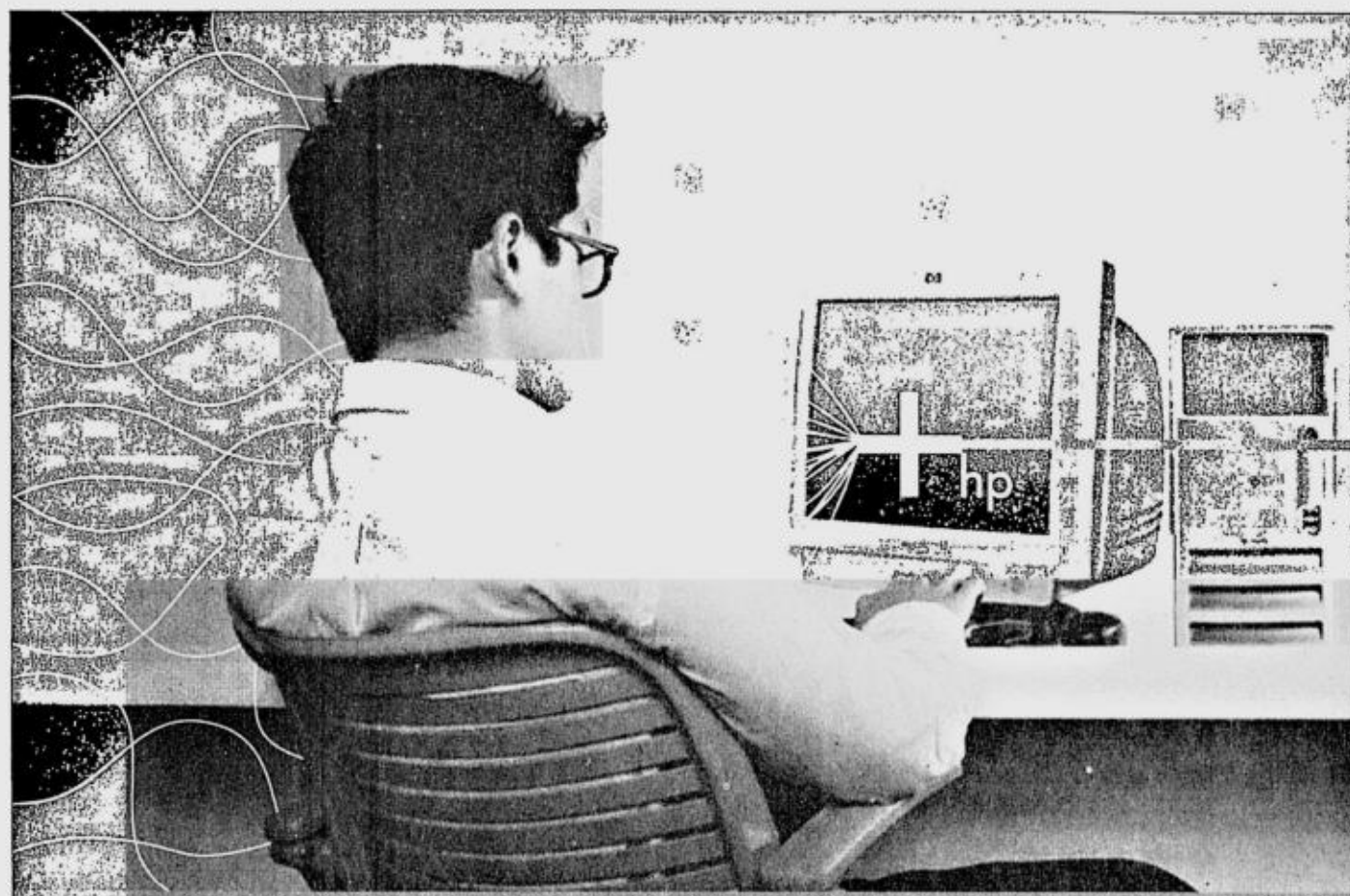
Ruiz died while undergoing treatment at the Family Clinic in Tayug town, about 3 km from Natividad.

Police said they were still establishing the motive in the slaying.

Chief Insp. Eddie Granil, the town's police chief, said Ruiz's house was strafed on Nov. 4 last year but the police were still trying to establish if that incident was connected to the killing.

Granil said Ruiz reported the strafing incident to the police but he did not ask for a security aide.

Three shells from a .45 cal pistol were found at the crime scene. Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau



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NAKTF BOUNTY Snitch gets P1M for kidnap suspect

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

A TIPSTER from Leyte became an instant millionaire for providing information that led to the arrest of the country's No. 4 most wanted kidnapper.

"Welcome to the newest member of the millionaires club," President Macapagal-Arroyo quipped as she shook hands with and handed a blue folder containing the P1 million cash bounty to the informant, whose face was concealed with a black hood, when he was presented for the awarding ceremony at the Palace Music Room.

"We will not give his name and show his face so that the (kidnappers) won't get back at him," the President said.

The President also presented her the blown-up copy of a Landbank check as proof of his reward. He was the first recipient of a bounty since the National Anti-Kidnapping Task Force was created in Oct. 26 last year.

The man was immediately whisked away to an inner Palace room after he was presented by Ms Macapagal and Naktf chief Angelo Reyes to the media that he forgot to pick up the folder containing his reward. The President picked up the money herself as she left the Music Room to confer again with Reyes and the tipster.

Reyes said the man received the P1 million bounty for the capture of Allan Niegas, No. 4 on the

Naktf order of battle of kidnap for ransom syndicate leaders.

Niegas was arrested on Dec. 4 last year but Reyes said the bounty was awarded only yesterday because authorities had to ascertain that the rightful informant got the money.

Reyes said Niegas was the leader of a "subgroup" of the Waray-Waray kidnap-for-ransom syndicate and was responsible for at least eight kidnapping cases in Metro Manila, Central Luzon and Southern Tagalog. He was tagged for the Manikis and Tanchay cases in December 2002, and the 2003 kidnapping of Edwin Tan (February), Felipe Esteban (April), Lucia Viray (May), Letty Tan (June) and Wilbert Uy (July).

"This is the most successful anti-kidnapping campaign we had under the leadership of Secretary Reyes. But one reason why they are able to do this is that the citizens, the ordinary Filipinos, are helping," Ms Macapagal said.

She cited the case of the Niegas informant.

A Naktf statement said the informant saw the Naktf most wanted infomercial on a local television station and reported Niegas' whereabouts to a nearby police station. Niegas was arrested in Barangay Culasi-an, Capocan, Leyte by Naktf and Police Regional Office 8 operatives.

Reyes said the government would take steps for the protection of the informant.

THE DAILY GOSPEL



Wednesday, March 10, 2004
2nd Week of Lent

1st Reading: Jer 18:18-20
Gospel: Mt 20:17-28

When Jesus was going to Jerusalem, he took the Twelve aside and said to them on the way, "See, we are going to Jerusalem. There the Son of Man will be given over to the chief priests and the teachers of the Law who will condemn him to death. They will hand him over to the foreigners who will mock him, scourge him and crucify him. But he will be raised to life on the third day."

Then the mother of James and John came to Jesus with her sons, and she knelt down to ask a favor. Jesus said to her, "What do you want?" And she answered, "Here you have my two sons. Grant that they may sit, one at your right and one at your left, when you are in your kingdom."

Jesus said to the brothers, "You do not know what you are asking. Can you drink the cup that I am about to drink?" They answered, "We can." Jesus replied, "You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right or at my left is not for me to grant. That will be for those for whom the Father has prepared it."

The other ten heard all this and were angry with the two brothers. Then Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the nations act as tyrants, and the powerful oppress them. It shall not be so among you; whoever wants to be more important in your group shall make himself your servant. And if you want to be first, make yourself the servant of all. Be like the Son of Man who has come, not to be served but to serve and to give his life to redeem many."

Commentary

Mark says that it was James and John who asked Jesus for important posts in his kingdom (10:37). But Matthew puts the blame on their mother! But the cover-up is transparent in the text when you check the original. "Jesus said to the brothers, 'You (plural) do not know what you (plural) are asking. Can you (plural) drink the cup that I am about to drink?' They answered, 'We can.'" He was speaking to them, not to their mother. Furthermore, the others were angry "with the two brothers."

The anger of the others reveals something else. Why were they not just amused, or perhaps sorry for them? Anger reveals a personal stake in the matter. I think the others too saw themselves in the running for the top posts!

Today's reading, then, has the same theme as yesterday's. The only difference is that yesterday's was about the Pharisees, but today's is about the Apostles!

Still, the Lord was able to love them to the end. Therein lies hope for us all.

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Heart, not brains, is what matters—FPJ

By Carlito Pablo

THE HEART not the brains is what matters most in a leader, declared opposition candidate Fernando Poe Jr., the popular movie star whose intellectual deficiencies opponents and critics love to show up.

To cheers from his audience of adoring volunteers, Poe promised the kind of "leadership that will not only use this," pointing to his temple, "but also this," pointing to his heart.

"Because without this," again pointing to his heart, "all the rest don't matter," Poe said in Filipino.

Poe is a high school dropout who has spent all his professional life in the make-believe world of movies.

One of the campaign advertisements of President Macapagal-Arroyo points out that intellect is a vital trait of a leader, particularly the head of nation. The President, who has a doctorate in economics, is shown in the ad as saying that a leader should be "very smart."

In his speech, Poe promised that if elected, he will become a "true servant" of the people.

Speaking to reporters later, he said he would call for a restructuring of the foreign debt if elected. The funds going for debt repayments would instead be used for social services, he said.

Economic advisers

His economic advisers have already prepared a plan for this, said Poe who showed up at the launching yesterday of the Kilos para sa Bagong Umaga, the coalition of volunteer groups supporting his candidacy, at the University of the Philippines.

Poe, wearing a *barong* Tagalog, and his wife Susan Roces who was in a green pant suit, later led the signing of a "social covenant" that purported to restore people's confidence in government.

"We are not introducing a new dream to embark on. What we represent is a fresh faith in the old dream, the dreams of our fellow countrymen," it read.

Representatives from different sectors were called on to relate the hardships they were experiencing under the Macapagal administration.

An elderly member of an indigenous tribe in Zambales said she wished that indigenous people would be represented in Congress in a Poe presidency. The candidate went up the stage to give her a hug.

Stampede of volunteers

Poe's campaign leaders said there has been a stampede of volunteers offering their services after the Supreme Court ruled that Poe was a natural-born Filipino and qualified to run for president.

Actor Rez Cortez, a key figure in Poe's national coordinating center for volunteers, said that while they are not really sure if the volunteers

are also voters, they don't really mind.

"Whoever wants to sign, signs. We don't ask if they are voters," he said.

Cortez said they would put up a "data base" of volunteers to determine who are actual voters.

Another campaign leader, lawyer Raul Lambino said they would put up barangay-based support groups of 10 to 20 individuals nationwide to monitor the voting and counting of votes on May 10.

Support groups

Lambino, who belongs to the Lawyers for Electoral Advocacy and Democracy, said these support groups would help make up for Poe's failure to put up candidates for local slates, in the municipal, provincial and congressional district levels.

Lambino said an estimated 30 percent of local posts nationwide have been left unchallenged by the Poe team.

"There are areas where we don't have local candidates," Lambino said.



FERNANDO POE JR.: Fresh faith in old dreams.

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Partisan ex-generals apologize

By Christian V. Esguerra

RETIRED military and police officials openly supporting opposition presidential candidates Fernando Poe Jr. and Sen. Panfilo Lacson have apologized to their peers for using the name of their organization in their "partisan" activities.

Members of the Association of Generals for Poe (Agpoe) and the Association of Generals for Ping (Agping) have promised to stop using the name of the Association of Generals and Flag Officers Inc. (Agfo), said retired Brig. Gen. Jose Bello, Agfo president.

"They made a promise and we have accepted their apology," Bello told reporters yesterday, but refused to identify the Agpoe or Agping leaders involved.

The apology came during an Agfo fellowship meeting on Feb. 27 at Camp Aguinaldo. But only 80 of the group's 700 members showed up.

'Agping' leaders

Former Philippine National Police chief Recaredo Sarmiento, one of the first retired officers to announce his support for Lacson's candidacy, was not at the meeting, Bello said. Sarmiento is one of the leaders of Agping.

Bello said he and other Agfo leaders advised retired members not to use Agfo's name in their partisan political activities. Members still in active service were told to stay apolitical.

"We may have individual preferences but they should not lead to division," he said, noting that Agping and Agpoe members are also part of Agfo.

"We should not drag the association into partisan politics because we have active members," he said.

Agfo released a four-point set of guidelines for its members setting out the group's responsibilities to "Filipino society, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and other uniformed services, Filipino veterans and retirees, and fellow members."

"We would like to dispel perceptions that we are political," Bello said. "We are not endorsing any candidate."

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Probe of deadly SuperFerry fire starts tomorrow

By Leila B. Salaverria

FORMAL investigation into the blaze that gutted SuperFerry 14 begins tomorrow to determine if the mysterious explosion that killed 22 passengers and left 112 others missing was caused by faulty electric wiring or terror attack.

Lt. Commander Ramon Reblora, who is a member of the 10-man special board of ma-

rine inquiry, said they had subpoenaed six people from SuperFerry 14, including that ship's captain, Master Ceferino Manzo.

Others who were summoned were 2nd Master Rolando Coyme, the helmsman on duty, the lookout on duty, the chief engineer and the engine officer on duty.

"The plan of the board is to have as many witness-survivors, especially those who have personal knowledge. As much as possible, if we could summon all those on duty during the incident, we would do that," Reblora told reporters.

Asked whether the board would also look into the claim by the Abu Sayyaf Group that they bombed the ship, he said they would weigh all possible angles when they start the marathon hearings on Thursday. According to Reblora, investigation has also been scheduled for Friday and Saturday at the Philippine Coast Guard Compound and is expected to be finished in seven days.

After the dawn explosion last Feb. 27 of SuperFerry 14 as it sailed out of Manila Bay on its way to the cities of Bacolod and Cagayan de Oro with 899 passengers and crew, the Abu

Sayyaf claimed it had planted one of its men and bombed the ferry. Government authorities, however, said initial investigation could not support the Abu Sayyaf's statements.

The task

In an order creating the SBMI, the board is tasked to determine the cause of the fire and establish the person or persons responsible for the incident and any violation of maritime law, rules and regulations which will become the bases for legal action. The board is also expected to draw up recommendations to prevent similar incidents in the future.

Yesterday, counsels for the SuperFerry management headed by lawyer Arthur Lim presented to Reblora and Commodore Benjamin Mata the documents subpoenaed by the board.

No bodies

Rescuers yesterday did not find any remains of the passengers from the half-submerged ship, said Commodore Wilfredo Tamayo.

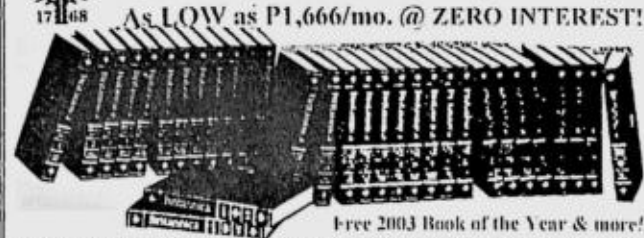
Tamayo, who had spoken with operatives in the rescue operation, said rescuers had reported that they did not detect any stretch that may come from decomposing bodies in the areas of the ferry that they had combed yesterday.

"But this does not mean we are abandoning our responsibility. We'd still continue the search," he told the INQUIRER in a phone interview yesterday.

He said the debris that had accumulated in the A-deck would still have to be removed to check whether or not there were still bodies trapped beneath.

Tamayo also said that rescuers were still working to cut a three by four meter hole in the navigation deck of the ship to reach the A-deck easier.

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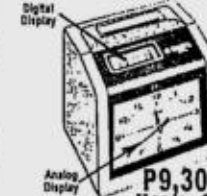
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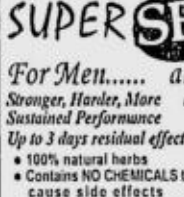
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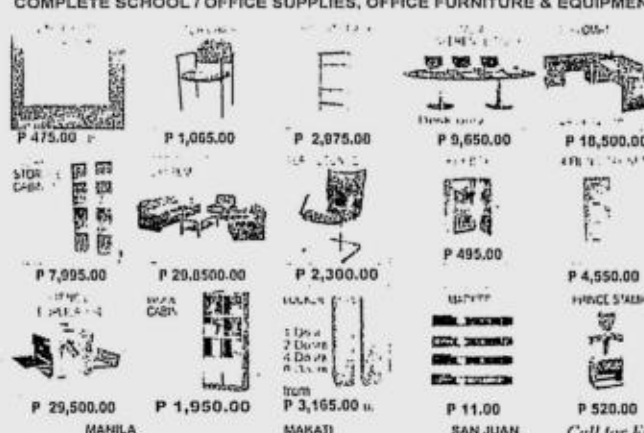
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THE COALITION for Better Education, which groups 102 organizations, aims to raise the number of elementary graduates like these students of the Kruz na Ligaz Elementary School in Quezon City from the present seven out of every 10 students to eight out of 10.

Business wants more students to finish school

From page A1

CBE.

Over the past three years, 102 organizations have signed up for the CBE, which envisions itself as a "catalyst for responsive education."

They have committed themselves to work together and promote teacher training and curriculum development, improve links among the academe, industry and government, and fight for reforms in the education sector.

Teacher excellence

The CBE hopes to increase the number of

students finishing elementary, high school and college through two major projects: the Center for Teacher Excellence or CefTex and Involving Communities for Better Education or iN.Cube.

CefTex's vision is to produce quality teachers through intensive training in classroom methodologies in such subjects as English, Science, Math and Values Integration.

Available data show that only 23 percent of teachers pass licensure examinations in the country.

Through CefTex, CBE hopes to increase the passing rate of teachers by another 30 percent by providing a premier education and certification-assessment center for teachers in Asia.

CefTex is a project of PBSI, Innove Communications, Cebu Normal University, CitySavings Bank, AGFI and RAFI.

Community involvement

iN.Cube, on the other hand, aims to get the community involved in the governance of a local public school by forming a Local School Community Council.

The council, composed of parents, school officials, the local government, business and other partners, will conceptualize and implement a school development plan that will help raise academic standards through the continued assessment of the students' competency by different sectors.

Aboitiz explained that there was an urgent need to work together to improve the education system because of the deteriorating quality of education.

Factors for low competence

"Consider this scenario—one teacher handling 65 students, five students sharing one book, four students sharing one desk or perhaps a class being conducted under the shade of a tree," he said.

Aboitiz said these factors had led to low competency levels among those who managed to graduate from the public school system.

"Low levels of competency leave them with very little chance for employment, low entrepreneurial capabilities and the capability to succeed. Without engaging the youth productively in development opportunities, it is easy to assume higher levels of disappointment, and despair will ensue... They will ask why? Basically we have not prepared them to succeed," he said.

Call centers

This partly explains why only a fraction of Filipino college graduates get to work as call center agents, even if the Philippines has established a reputation as one of the world's best outsourcing sites.

CBE figures show that only four out of 100 applicants land a job in a call center.

"Although we take pride in our ability to speak the English language, we still do not meet the standards in spoken English that is required by the international market. The failure of curriculum developers to address the criteria set by the global market has led to our inability to take full advantage of existing opportunities," Aboitiz said.

Human capital

He, however, was hopeful that with the combined efforts of more than 100 organizations under the CBE, there would be a recognizable improvement in the quality of education over the next 10 years.

"Only through this cooperation that we will be able to bring back quality education and raise it to a level [that meets] global standards. CBE is your project and it is calling each one of us to action to truly develop what we know to be the Philippines' greatest competitive advantage: its human capital," Aboitiz said.

Low investment

The low quality of education in the Philippines is partly due to its low investment in education, according to a statistical report released last month by the Unesco Institute for Statistics.

The report, based on official 2000 and 2001 education data from 22 countries in South and East Asia, showed that only 3.5 percent of the Philippine gross domestic product was spent on education, compared with 6.2 percent for Malaysia and 5.4 percent for Thailand.

Unesco said a government's investment in education "is one indication of the relative importance that a government places on education, the funding priority that it gives to each level of education and the identification of potential needs for additional resources in order to further develop the education system."

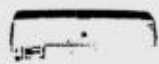
The Philippines spends about P5,500 per pupil in the elementary and high school level, or 1/6 of what Thailand spends for basic education and about 1/10 of that of Singapore, according to the Education for All 2000 report.

What the Philippines invests in education is way below the world average of about P40,000 per student and just a shade of the P200,000 per student that the United States spends per student.



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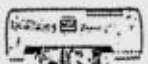
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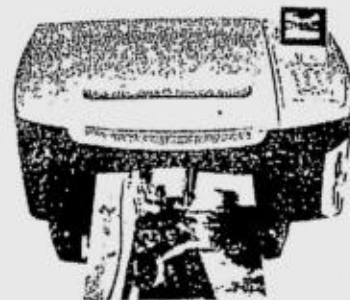
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60 'comfort women' press fight vs crimes against humanity

By Philip C. Tubeza

SIXTY elderly Filipinas asked the Supreme Court on Monday to declare as crimes against humanity the rape and torture they suffered in the hands of Japanese soldiers during World War II.

Calling themselves Malaya Lolas, the "comfort women," aged 69 to 93, also asked the high tribunal to order the government to demand a formal apology from Japan and seek reparations for the atrocities.

Several Japanese peace activists accompanied the Lolas to the SC. Ichiro Hirata said members of his group called Peace Cycle 2004 were "very ashamed and very angry" about the abuses.

In a 33-page petition for certiorari executed with the help of

lawyer H. Harry Roque Jr. and his students at the University of the Philippines, the Lolas said the government should espouse their cause against Japan before the International Court of Justice or before other legal forums or tribunals.

The petitioners said they had suffered "the most brutal and inhuman acts that could ever be committed against women." They asked the SC to declare that as far as their claim was concerned, the Philippines was not bound by the peace treaty it signed with Japan in 1951; and that Foreign Affairs Secretary Delia Albert and Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo committed a grave abuse of discretion when they refused to get involved in the suit.

Besides Romulo and Albert,

the other respondents in the case are Justice Secretary Ma. Mercedes Gutierrez and Solicitor General Alfredo Benipayo.

Coming all the way from Barangay Mapanique in Candaba, Pampanga to file the petition, many of the Lolas wore violet as a sign of protest, and to commemorate International Women's Day.

They claimed that when the Japan occupied the Philippines in 1942, "sexual slavery facilities" were established all over the country for its troops.

In the morning of Nov. 23, 1944, they recalled, Japanese soldiers arrived in Mapanique, ransacked the houses and ordered all

the villagers to proceed to the school grounds. The men were castrated, bludgeoned or beaten, and then slaughtered in full view of their families. The women were forced to carry the soldiers' loot to the Japanese headquarters, called Bahay na Pula (red house) in San Ildefonso, Pampanga.

The petition said the Lolas were detained from one day to three weeks, "repeatedly beaten, raped, and abused" by the Japanese soldiers who did not spare even little girls who were eight or nine years old at the time.

Most of the victims have died.

The Lolas cited a ruling in December 2000 by the Women's In-

ternational War Crimes Tribunal, a people's court in The Hague, Netherlands, that said the "comfort women system" was "so extensive, the regulation of it so complex, and the crimes committed therein so routine," that the Japanese government had to have been involved.

They said the Japanese military issued rules governing the fa-

cilities, among them guidelines to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, and procedures on choosing the women recruits' "type" and ages.

The Philippine government has refused to espouse the rape victims' cause since, under the 1951 peace treaty, it is said to have waived reparation claims for Filipinos' sufferings in World War II.

Suspected RP ship due in China

BEIJING—A Philippine-flagged freighter is due to dock in China Wednesday where an investigation is expected to be conducted into claims that it sunk a French trawler, killing five sailors.

The Seattle Trader is expected in the southern port of Fangchenggang in Guangxi province around noon.

"The ship Seattle Tribune will arrive at the port around 12 noon on Wednesday," said a Fangchenggang port authority official.

"I have contacted the agent of the ship to find out whether we will receive some investigators," Edwin Cristobal, general manager of Victoria Shipping, the company that owns the Seattle Trader. AFP

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UP Manila	1.1	Cultural Center of the Phils.	2.0
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Estrada defends GMA; criminal charges filed

From page A1

The five-page complaint was filed in the Ombudsman by the groups PlunderWatch, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), Coalition for Unity, Recognition and Advancement of Government Employees (Courage) and Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, Health Alliance for Democracy, and individuals Romulo Abaya, Fr. Allan Arcebucho, Marichu Lambino, Carolina Araullo, Fr. Jose Dizon and Ferdinand Gaité.

All were among the organizations and individuals actively involved in Edsa II in January 2001, which ousted Estrada and installed Ms Macapagal in Malacañang.

Assistant Ombudsman Ernesto Nocos pointed out that Ms Macapagal enjoyed presidential immunity, and that a case against her could not be filed in court unless she was impeached or out of office.

Unperturbed

Malacañang, however, was unperturbed, and stressed that

GMA gave Erap a golf cart

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo gifted her ousted predecessor a golf cart to help him move around Camp Capinpin.

"[She] sent it when she learned that President Estrada was having difficulty walking [because of his ailing knees] and was in deep pain," Housing Secretary Mike Defensor con-

firmed in a phone interview.

He said it was a gift and an act of kindness on the part of the President.

Defensor, Ms Macapagal's campaign spokesperson and her personal emissary to Estrada, said the golf cart was sent to Camp Capinpin last January. **Juliet Labog-Javellana**

there was nothing wrong in Ms Macapagal's policy of humane treatment for Estrada.

"We welcome this case as we've always welcomed the cases that are filed in the appropriate forums for us to make clear the soundness and legality of the government's position," Ricardo Saludo, deputy spokesperson for the President, told reporters at a briefing.

Saludo reiterated what Ms Macapagal told INQUIRER executives, editors and reporters on Thursday night—that she had always followed the rule of law and had enunciated her policy on

Estrada during her first State of the Nation Address in July 2001.

"She has always maintained that the rule of law must be followed and at the same time... the humanitarian condition of the former President should be given attention because of the empathy that our people, particularly the less privileged segments of our society, feel toward [his] condition," Saludo said.

"And lastly, we stress once again that we find nothing wrong in a policy of humane [treatment for] the former President," he said.

Defensor also said it was up to the lawyers to determine whether a case should be filed against the President who, under the Constitution, enjoys immunity from suit.

Not house arrest secretary

Defensor, the President's campaign spokesperson who had admitted to having visited Estrada at the latter's rest house, said he was ready to face the charges.

He reiterated his position that there was nothing wrong with extending humane treatment to Estrada.

"I'd like to inform Attorney Lambino that I'm the housing secretary, not the house arrest secretary," Defensor said.

Ms Macapagal's spokesperson Ignacio Bunye issued a statement saying she had "enunciated the policy of humanitarian treatment under the law."

"This is a simple statement of decency and compassion that all Filipinos understand," he said.

Bunye also said allegations that Ms Macapagal could be impeached for allowing Estrada to go to his rest house were "absurd."

"Nevertheless, the [PNP] has already ordered an investigation of the matter and we hope that the probe would help us in ferret-

ing out the details and to determine if there were any lapses among the custodians of the former President," he said.

Connivance or consent

The complainants took Ms Macapagal et al. to task for "conniving with or consenting to [Estrada's] evasion of prison," and for "usurpation of judicial functions," acts punishable under Articles 223 and 241, respectively, of the Revised Penal Code.

They said the President et al. had "knowledge," "consent, tolerance, and connivance" in allowing Estrada to stay at his rest house for at least two days a week from Dec. 24, 2003 to March 4, 2004.

They also said these acts constituted an "obstruction of the execution of the order of the court that has jurisdiction" over Estrada, and which had decreed that he be detained in Camp Capinpin.

The complainants said Ms Macapagal, Defensor and Bunye made such declarations in their interviews and talks with the INQUIRER and in an interview with ABS-CBN's TV Patrol on March 5.

They noted that in the TV interview, Bunye admitted Ms Macapagal's knowledge of Estrada's transfer to the rest house when he said: "With permission, Estrada is brought to his rest house and at the end of the day he is brought back to his detention center."

However, they said records would show that "there is no court order allowing Estrada to go to his rest house, hence the 'permission' stated by Bunye is not from the court," and violative of the provisions of the Revised Penal Code.

Exhibit Annex A: PDI story

The complainants presented as Exhibit "Annex A" the INQUIRER's March 6 issue wherein the President confirmed Estrada's virtual house arrest at his vacation estate during a dinner with the paper's executives, editors and reporters.

They noted that the same report also contained Estrada's admission that Sacramento and Ebdane were the ones who gave him permission to entertain visitors at his rest house and hear Mass in his private chapel every Sunday.

They also noted that Defensor



PRESIDENT Macapagal presents a P1-million check to the hooded man who provided information that led to the arrest of the No. 4 most wanted kidnapper in the country. (Story on Page A4.)

admitted knowledge and alleged connivance with Estrada in the latter's transfer to his rest house when Defensor admitted visiting him there during an interview with ABS-CBN News on March 7.

Witnesses

"I went there... The administration is only trying to give him humanitarian consideration," Defensor reportedly told ANC.

The complainants cited as witnesses Estrada, INQUIRER president Alexandra Prieto-Romualdez and reporters Juliet Labog-Javellana and Armand Nocom, and Ces Oreña-Drilon, news anchor of ABS-CBN's TV Patrol Saturday.

Fall guys

In an interview, Carolina Araullo of Bayan said Estrada's custodians were now being used as "fall guys."

"President Macapagal-Arroyo, who knew of these arrangements, and in fact tolerated them, consented to them and connived with Estrada to allow him to enjoy special treatment, is indeed culpable for criminal acts. Much more so than the low-ranking police custodians of Estrada who, from all appearances, are now being made fall guys by Ebdane, Special Prosecutor [Dennis] Villa-Ignacio and the Sandigan-

bayan," Araullo said.

Private prosecutors in Estrada's plunder case said they would also file a motion asking Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo and Deputy Ombudsman Margarito Gervacio to inhibit themselves from hearing the case against Ms Macapagal.

They said any ruling by Marcelo might be doubtful in its neutrality because his law firm used to be the legal counsel of the First Family, while Gervacio was known to be an Estrada appointee.

'Premature'

But Rep. Antonio Cuenco, of Cebu and Alan Peter Cayetano of Taguig-Pateros, both lawyers and both of the ruling Lakas-CMD, said the complaint filed against Ms Macapagal et al. was "premature and flawed."

Cuenco said to hold the President liable for alleged criminal acts committed by any subordinate was contrary to the principles of the justice system.

Cayetano noted that the Sandiganbayan had already asked Ebdane to explain the matter. "Why don't we wait for the Sandiganbayan's findings?" he said, adding that the complainants were making "a mountain out of an anthill." *With a report from Cynthia D. Balana*

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Erap very generous, says ex-jailer

From page A1

part of his nature," the officer said.

The officer recalled that during his stint at the Police Security and Protection Office (PSPO), visitors came to see the ousted President at least thrice a week. The visitors often brought packed meals good for at least 60 people, including Estrada's escorts.

Abundance of food

Some occasions were practically catered affairs, the officer said. "There was no problem with meals because there was simply an abundance of food."

Another police officer said Estrada also gave presents to guards and well-wishers last Christmas.

All these might have resulted in familiarity between Estrada and his jail guards, said the officer formerly with the PSPO.

"It's really natural in a prison setup," he said. "That's why escorts are reshuffled regularly—so they won't be too familiar with the people they're assigned to guard."

But the other source said Estrada hardly received favors when the PSPO was still headed by Chief Supt. Prospero Noble, now director of the Southern Police District.

"He was very strict; that's why Estrada usually distanced himself from him," the other source said of Noble. "They may have appeared close in pictures and videos. But the general was just trying to be nice to him."

Investigation

Philippine National Police Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. said Estrada's generosity would be part of the investigation into the reports that he had regularly been spending time at his rest house across from Camp Capinpin.

Told that the "generosity angle" would tend to suggest that he and other top PNP officials had no knowledge of Estrada's supposed escapades, Ebdane merely said: "I have to give my answer in the proper forum."

Ebdane and Chief Supt. Rolando Sacramento, PSPO head, are scheduled to appear at 9 a.m. today before the Sandiganbayan, where Estrada is being tried for the capital offense of plunder.

The two were summoned to explain why they should not be cited in contempt for supposedly allowing Estrada to leave Camp Capinpin.

In the meantime, Ebdane is awaiting the

result of the inquiry being conducted by the office of Director Eduardo Matillano, PNP director for investigation and detective management.

Ebdane said it would be unfair to blame anyone pending the completion of the inquiry. "We can't punish anybody until we find out what really happened on the ground," he said.

But Ebdane has sacked the 15-man custodial unit that had been guarding Estrada at the camp. That team, led by Supt. Melchor Ysulat, was replaced yesterday by another 15-man group headed by Senior Supt. Pedro Nicolas, chief of the PSPO diplomatic protection unit.

Sacramento yesterday gave the new security team a two-hour closed-door orientation inside Estrada's detention bungalow.

Fair treatment under FPJ

San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, Estrada's son, said the family is counting on better treatment for the deposed leader if his best friend Fernando Poe Jr. is elected president in May.

"We expect fairer treatment under an FPJ presidency, unlike in the Macapagal administration where he can't have a balanced trial," Ejercito said in an interview.

He said the family would continue to seek better arrangements with respect to house arrest for his father in a post-Macapagal administration.

"He doesn't plan to escape, in the first place," the son said, adding: "This is a political trial and it is expected that we will see a conviction."

Told that Malacañang had apparently consented to the controversial arrangement that allowed Estrada to spend time at his rest house, Ejercito said the administration "wanted to get the supporters" of his father.

"They need this. They've been going around the country and they've felt that the people still love and support Erap," he said.

"The family's only wish is for President Erap to have a fair trial," he added.

Poe had earlier said that if elected, he would allow the courts to decide the fate of Estrada, for whom he campaigned in the 1998 elections.

Jinggo Estrada, the ousted President's elder son and his co-accused in the plunder case, is part of Poe's senatorial lineup.

During campaign rallies, Poe would introduce the young Estrada as his godson. *With a report from Carlito Pablo*

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Lakas solon says FPJ, Ping playing 'good cop, bad cop'

By Cynthia D. Balana
and Carlito Pablo

AN ADMINISTRATION congressman insisted yesterday the tactical alliance between opposition presidential candidates Fernando Poe Jr. and Sen. Panfilo Lacson was for real contrary to the latter's denials.

Rep. Prospero Pichay (Lakas-CMD, Surigao del Sur) said his information came from an "A-one" source in the opposition who told him the pact was brokered not by the Iglesia Ni Cristo as reported but by allies of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

Pichay said the terms of the alliance called for Lacson to back out of the presidential race in favor of Poe before the May 10 elections.

In the meantime, he said, the two had agreed to play "good cop, bad cop" in a bid to overturn President

Macapagal-Arroyo's rise in the surveys, with Lacson doing the dirty tricks and Poe taking the high road in the campaign.

"The talks are in a highly advanced stage, with the only things to be finalized are the concessions being asked for by the Lacson camp," Pichay said.

He said it was expected that both Poe and Lacson would deny their alliance.

Yesterday, Lacson did just that.

"When did he become my spokesperson?" Lacson said. "I don't know what Congressman Pichay is talking about."

"Why would we back out?" he said. "Our slogan is *Buo ang loob, walang takot* (Strong of heart, we are not afraid)."

"Would somebody without fear ever back out?" he added.

House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla, the only candidate running for senator with Lacson, said the supposed alliance

between the latter and Poe was part of a disinformation campaign aimed at getting Lacson out of the presidential race.

Padilla chided Pichay for insisting there was an alliance when there was none.

"This only confirms the administration is afraid of Lacson more than Poe. They think that FPJ is easier to demolish as evidenced by his slide in the surveys. In contrast, Ping is slowly but surely picking up in the surveys," he said.

Poe, however, extended the hand of unity to Lacson.

"We always need the support of all," Poe told reporters yesterday after attending a gathering of his volunteers at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City.

Poe said he was still hopeful the scheduled April talks between him and Lacson on the merger of their forces would materialize. With Norman Bordadora

8 rebs slain in Zamboanga clash

EIGHT communist guerrillas and a soldier were killed in a clash between the military, police and rebels near San Felipe, Zamboanga, yesterday.

About 15 guerrillas of the communist New People's Army ran into a combined patrol of soldiers and police, sparking a prolonged gunbattle that left nine dead and two soldiers wounded, the military reported.

The bodies of the eight rebels had been recovered along with eight rifles, the military added.

It was one of the most violent clashes in recent months involving the 8,800-strong NPA, the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines which has been waging a Maoist campaign to seize power for the past 35 years. **AFP**

Roco: Hike 'sin' taxes to solve budget deficit

By TJ Burgonio

TO CUT the ballooning budget deficit and raise revenues, former Education Secretary Raul Roco yesterday proposed adjusting the tax rates of beer, cigarette and liquor relative to inflation.

And to boost the country's competitiveness in the region, Roco endorsed a lower corporate income tax.

The standard-bearer of Alyansa ng Pag-Asa spelled out his fiscal policies yesterday during the latest edition of Presidential Candidates Series '04, a forum organized by various business groups.

Dropping his signature floral shirt in favor of a barong Tagalog, Roco spoke before a motley crowd of Filipino, Chinese, American and European executives at the Hotel Inter-Continental in Makati City.

Balance

He vowed to "bring the budget into balance by 2007." To achieve this, he proposed indexing the specific tax rates of beer, cigarettes and liquor relative to inflation, among other measures.

Roco explained: "The rates were increased by 12 percent in 2000. Since then, prices have increased by 23 percent. Government has not benefited from the increase in revenues. This measure will bring in P14 billion annually."

As of January this year, the budget deficit stood at P16 billion.

Roco admitted that, as a senator, he had opposed similar measures. He said he changed his mind after much thought. "The country needs revenues. Everybody will have to sacrifice."

He proposed bringing down the corporate income tax rate from 32 percent to the range of 25-30 percent.

The country, he said, has one of the highest corporate income tax rates in the region. Thailand, China and Indonesia have 30 percent income tax rate; Malaysia and Vietnam, 28 percent, and Singapore, 20 percent. "This discourages the productivity of labor," he pointed out.

Roco's proposals drew positive remarks from some of the businessmen.

Said Guillermo Luz, executive director of

the Makati Business Club: "I think we got a clearer picture in the sense that, for the first time, we're listening to him talk about his policy on the deficit and tax collection. I don't think that's ever been reported."

However, Luz noted, lowering corporate income tax rates would be "tough."

"That has been the toughest for any finance secretary in the past," he told reporters. "We have an unfinished comprehensive tax reform program in place."

Present at the forum were executives from the American Chamber of Commerce, Bankers' Association of the Philippines, Bishops' Association of the Philippines, Chinese-Filipino Business Club, European Chamber of Commerce and Management Association of the Philippines.

Text tax

Roco also batted for strict collection of the 10 percent value-added tax on text messages. "Has the 10 percent VAT on pre-paid cards been collected or remitted to the BIR? If the tax were collected properly, the government should generate at least P18 billion annually."

Other revenue-raising measures he proposed were: increasing the tax effort ratio by at least one percentage point every year to reach 16 percent by 2007, regulating expenditures, reducing interest rates in lending, and tapping volunteer lawyers and NGOs to prosecute tax evasion cases.

"If we improve the collection of the income tax by at least 25 percent every year, this will bring P57 billion in additional revenues," Roco said. "If we improve VAT collection by 25 percent, we can generate P43 billion more annually."

But ultimately, he stressed, the solution to the country's fiscal woes was a credible, honest leadership.

"Nothing happens without leadership," he said.

Brother Eddie Villanueva of the Jesus Is Lord Movement is set to speak at the same forum on March 25, President Macapagal-Arroyo on April 14.

Fernando Poe Jr. and Sen. Panfilo Lacson have declined the executives' invitation, citing lack of time. Businessman Eddie Gil has not been invited.



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No agri funds used in campaign—Lorenzo

THE DEPARTMENT of Agriculture debunked charges of opposition presidential candidate Sen. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson that some P728 million of the DA's funds had been diverted to administration politicians.

In a statement, Agriculture Secretary Luis "Cito" Lorenzo Jr. said the allegation is unfounded, since the DA has not released any amount from the P728 million Special Allocation Release Order cited by Lacson.

"We are still fine-tuning the guidelines for the release of these funds to ensure that they are used for their intended purpose," Lorenzo said. "The fund is subject to strict pre-and-post-audit requirement to ensure that it is wisely and prudently used," he explained.

The DA clarified that its development assistance in the form of agricultural implements and inputs, farm-to-market roads, and other agriculture and fisheries projects are meant to benefit all local government units regardless of the political affiliation of their leaders.

"The political affiliation of the recipients is not the consideration for the funding, but its contribution to the realization of the mandates given by government that includes food security, job generation and increased income," Lorenzo said.

"I assure the public... that our

job to serve the people will not be compromised despite the political season," he added.

In fact, Lorenzo said, intended recipients include opposition bets like Tawi-Tawi under Gov. Rashid Matba of the Partido ng Masang Pilipino, Negros Oriental under Gov. George Arnaiz of Nationalist People's Coalition, Laguna under Gov. Teresita Lazaro of PMP and Rizal province under Gov. Rebecca Ynares of the NPC.

Eastern Samar Rep. Marcelino Libanan of the NPC called on Lacson to apologize for wrongly accusing the administration that it had "bribed" solons and local government officials to support Ms. Macapagal's candidacy.

While it was true that congressmen and local officials had made representations with the DA to provide agri-development projects to their districts, regions and provinces, "this is normal because our people need these resources to boost agricultural productivity and ensure that food supply is adequate and inexpensive in our areas," Libanan said in a statement.

It is not true that DA projects were limited only to Lakas solons. Aside from Libanan, several other officials from various parties such as the NPC and PMP are also slated to receive funds.



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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

N. Korea rejects US nuclear demands

SEOUL—North Korea rejected a key US demand for easing nuclear tensions on Tuesday and threatened to link the withdrawal of US troops from South Korea to a settlement, in the latest sign the communist country is trying to bolster its hand ahead of new talks aimed at ending the dispute.

In a dispatch carried by the North's official KCNA news agency, Pyongyang dismissed as "infeasible and unrealistic" Washington's stance that the communist country verifiably and irreversibly dismantle its atomic weapons programs as a first step in resolving the 17-monthlong standoff. US insistence that North Korea

"completely, verifiably and irreversibly" begin dismantling its nuclear programs before receiving concessions was a key sticking point in last month's six-nation talks aimed at brokering a deal.

The talks bogged down over differences about what nuclear projects would be subject to dismantlement and how their shut down

would be verified. They ended without a major breakthrough.

North Korea blamed the outcome on "an infeasible and unrealistic old assertion that the DPRK should scrap its nuclear program first," adding that a change in "US attitude is a prerequisite to the settlement."

DPRK stands for Democratic People's Republic of Korea, North Korea's official name.

North Korea also reiterated that it may pin the withdrawal of US troops from South Korea to the nuclear talks and demand a

"verifiable and irreversible" security guarantee from Washington.

"Now that the US persistently forces a complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of nuclear program upon the DPRK, the latter cannot but demand the former guarantee a complete, verifiable and irreversible security, the core of which is the total withdrawal of the US troops from South Korea," the KCNA report said.

North Korea has said it is willing to give up its nuclear program in return for energy and economic aid, as well as a US guarantee

that it will not invade the communist country.

The communist country frequently demands that the United States remove its troops from South Korea, but attaching them to the nuclear issue is a new move. The United States keep 37,000 soldiers in South Korea as a legacy of the 1950-53 Korean War.

The new demands, if brought to the negotiating table, could complicate the next round of six-nation talks between the United States, the two Koreas, China, Russia and Japan. The

sides agreed to meet again before July and plan to form a lower-level "working group" to work out the details.

North Korea frequently accuses the United States of planning an attack and has asked Washington for a written security guarantee. Washington says it has no plans to invade and has offered to put something on paper.

A verifiable and irreversible security guarantee, however, could be akin to a security treaty—something many in Washington oppose. AP

Top cleric slams interim charter

BAGHDAD—Iraq's most influential Shiite cleric criticized the nation's newly signed interim constitution, saying it will not have legitimacy until it is approved by an elected body.

The criticism Monday from Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Hussein al-Sistani somewhat devalued a lavish ceremony to mark the signing of the charter by the US-picked Governing Council.

"Any law prepared for the transitional period will not gain legitimacy except after it is endorsed by an elected national assembly," al-Sistani said in a fatwa, or religious ruling, on his Web site.

The historic document promises to compensate Iraqis for years of oppression under Saddam Hussein, safeguard the freedoms and human rights of their ethnic and religious groups and lay down the foundations for a genuine democracy.

Al-Sistani said the document will gain legitimacy only when adopted by an elected assembly. His supporters on the Governing Council pledged to try and amend parts of the charter.

In contrast, US President George W. Bush praised the 22-page charter in statement, saying its adoption was a "historic milestone in the Iraqi people's long journey from tyranny and violence to liberty and peace."

The differences mirrored the deeply sectarian nature of politics in a post-Saddam Iraq where senior Shiite clerics like al-Sistani are exploiting the void left by Saddam's departure to exercise enormous influence on the US-backed political process. It comes against a backdrop of heightened tensions caused by changes in a political arena once dominated by Sunni Arabs, but now controlled by a Shiite ma-

majority and a large Kurdish community.

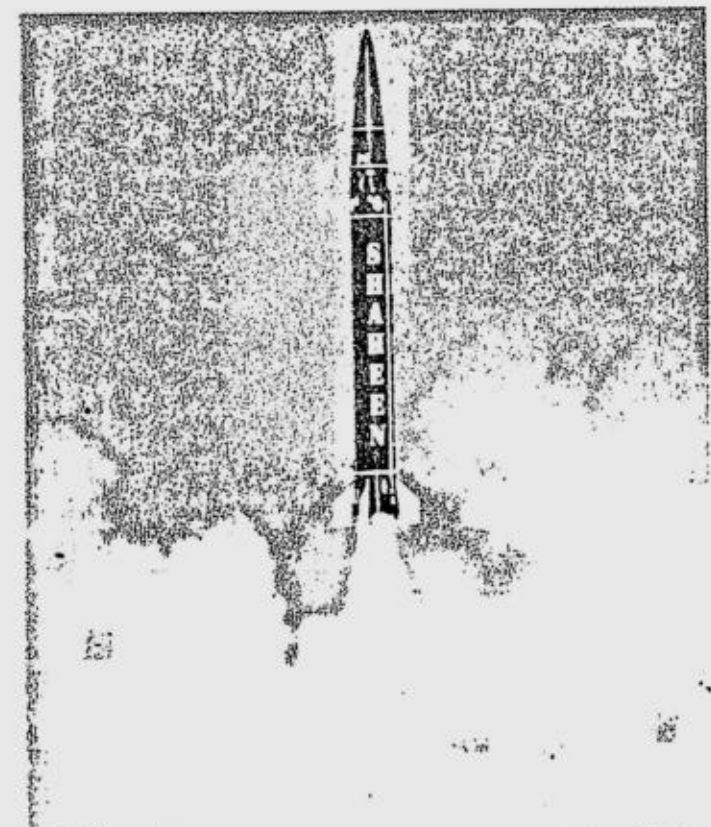
Monday's ceremony, held in the marble-and-glass Convention Center, a huge building inside the vast "Green Zone" complex housing the headquarters of the US-led coalition, kicked off with a recital of carefully chosen Quranic verses that urged Muslims to set their differences aside and close ranks.

Later, children dressed in Arab, Assyrian and Kurdish costumes performed an ensemble of patriotic songs.

"The executioner is gone, festivities will begin, we will wear colorful clothes now that sadness is behind us," went one song that alluded to Saddam's rule. The performance drew warm applause from the roughly 200 guests in attendance, including L. Paul Bremer, the US chief administrator in Iraq. AP



MEMBERS of the Iraqi Governing Council celebrate shortly after affixing their signatures on the new interim constitution in a historic signing ceremony March 8 in Baghdad. The signing came after the council members finally resolved a political impasse sparked by objections from the country's most powerful cleric. The signing was a key step in US plans to hand over power to the Iraqis. AP



PAKISTAN'S medium-range nuclear capable ballistic missile Shaheen-1 takes off from an undisclosed location in this file photo of Oct. 14, 2003. Pakistan test-fired on March 9 an intermediate-range nuclear-capable ballistic missile, which could reach all the cities in neighboring India. State-owned Pakistan Television announced that the missile could travel 2,000 km and carry all kinds of warheads. REUTERS

Pakistan tests nuke-capable long-range ballistic missile

ISLAMABAD—Pakistan successfully test fired on Tuesday an intermediate-range nuclear-capable ballistic missile that it says can reach all the cities of neighboring India.

The Pakistani military said in a statement the surface-to-surface Shaheen II missile was tested successfully.

"The two-stage Shaheen II Missile System, which has been indigenously developed by Pakistani scientists and engineers, can carry all types of warheads up to 2,000 km," it said.

There was no immediate confirmation of the capabilities of the missile, and India, which has a vigorous missile development program of its own, offered no immediate response to the news.

Pakistan says its weapons program is a response to that of nuclear-armed rival India, with which it has fought three wars since both countries won independence from Britain in 1947.

The statement said Pakistan had informed neighboring countries about the test as a "confidence-building" measure.

The test came after Israel last week concluded a deal to sell India a strategic airborne radar system despite warming ties between Islamabad and New Delhi.

Pakistan says the new missile exceeds the 1,500-km reach of the Ghaury, previously its longest-range missile, which some experts say was developed with North Korean help.

The test of the Shaheen II comes amid intense scrutiny of Pakistan's nuclear program after revelations that its scientists sold nuclear secrets to Iran, North Korea and Libya.

"Our strategic force goals are guided by the concept of minimum credible deterrence and that's why we have to test these missiles from time to time," foreign ministry spokesperson Masood Khan said on Monday.

Khan said India and Pakistan had a policy of informing each other ahead of missile tests.

He said the aim of the test would be to ensure the "reach" of the missile was sufficient to deter aggression and "prevent military coercion." Reuters

Opposition wants Roh impeached

SEOUL—South Korea's main opposition parties took the first parliamentary step on Tuesday in their unprecedented attempt to impeach President Roh Moo-hyun in a move that could cause chaos weeks before a parliamentary election.

A parliamentary official said a majority of National Assembly members had now signed papers to register the impeachment bill, sufficient to place the motion before the chamber.

Once the bill has been introduced, members must debate it within 72 hours.

The main opposition Grand National Party agreed on Tuesday to join the smaller Millennium Democratic Party in submitting the impeachment measure over the president's refusal to apologize for partisan comments in the run-up to parliamentary elections on April 15.

Oh Se-hoon of the Grand National Party said that the GNP had agreed to vote along party lines, but that the outcome of the impeachment bid was still unclear.

"It's hard to say which way the vote will go," he said.

A two-thirds majority in the 273-member chamber is required to pass the measure, but that vote is subject to subsequent approval by the Constitutional Court.

If the court rules in favor of impeachment, the president's powers are suspended and, under the constitution, the prime minister takes over in a temporary capacity.

Impeachment—often threatened but not carried through by South Korean opposition parties—would thrust the country into uncharted constitutional territory as its economy, Asia's fourth largest, recovers and it grapples with a nuclear crisis in North Korea.

It would also further sharpen political rivalries amid a probe into illicit political funding from "chaebol" conglomerates that form the backbone of South Korea's export-driven economy.

An interim prosecution report said on Monday the main chaebol had given \$70 million to the Grand National Party and \$8.3 million to Roh's camp in the 2002 presidential election campaign.

The Millennium Democrats proposed impeachment after the National Election Commission ruled last week that Roh had violated election rules by speaking out in favor of the breakaway Uri Party in this pre-electoral period. Reuters

Aristide calls for resistance

PORT-AU-PRINCE—Exiled Haitian leader Jean-Bertrand Aristide appealed to his supporters to peacefully resist an "occupation" of Haiti on Monday as a new president was installed in the chaotic Caribbean nation and heavily armed US troops chased away pro-Aristide marchers.

A day after gunfire killed at least six people in a huge demonstration celebrating Aristide's ouster, US Marines spearheading an international peacekeeping force rumbled on armored vehicles and patrolled on foot through Port-au-Prince's tense streets.

Military helicopters circled over slums where pro-Aristide militias manned barricades. Aristide loyalists were blamed for Sunday's killings in which US Marines opened fire for the first time in their week-old mission. Hundreds of ragged slum-dwellers looted an industrial park near the capital's airport but there were no reports of fresh clashes.

A UN assessment team was due to arrive on Tuesday to begin work on rebuilding Haiti after Aristide's flight on Feb. 29 to Africa, in the face of an armed rebellion and international pressure, sparked looting and killings.

The team will spend the next three months in Haiti laying the groundwork for the broad UN peacekeeping mission that will take over from the US-led multinational force.

At the National Palace, across the square from Sunday's bloodshed, President Boniface Alexandre, wearing a blue, yellow and red sash, was formally installed in office behind closed doors and under heavy guard by foreign troops.

Minutes after the ceremony for Alexandre, a former chief justice, hundreds of Aristide supporters crowded the streets in front of the palace demanding his return. They ran away when US troops guarding the palace appeared.

A council of "wise men" is set to pick a prime minister this week in a further step to piece together an administration in the Western Hemisphere's poorest country.

Washington scolded Aristide for insisting from exile in the Central African Republic that he was still the president.

"If Mr. Aristide really wants to serve his country, he really has to, we think, let his nation get on with the future and not try to stir up the past again," US state department

spokesman Richard Boucher said.

More than 200 people have been killed since the revolt erupted on Feb. 5, started by a street gang and joined by former soldiers and paramilitaries.

In the Central African Republic capital, Bangui, Aristide repeated his assertion that US forces abducted him, which the United States denies. "I am the elected president, and I remain the elected president," he said.

"This unfortunately has paved the way for occupation and... we launch an appeal for peaceful resistance," Aristide said in his first public appearance since arriving. "I'm choosing my words carefully: for a peaceful resistance."

Aristide, a once popular former Roman Catholic priest who championed Haiti's emergence into democracy more than a decade ago, fled after rebels closed in on the capital and the United States and France urged him to quit.

French lawyer Gilbert Collard said he and a US colleague would file suits in France and the United States saying Aristide was abducted. The suits would be filed in the next few days, once they receive authorization from the ousted leader. Reuters

Archeologists unearth 7th-century palace

TOKYO—Archeologists in western Japan have unearthed the remains of a wooden palace believed to be that of a seventh-century emperor who laid the foundations for the nation's centralized bureaucracy, a member of the team said Tuesday.

The discovery in the village of Asuka, about 400 km west of Tokyo, revealed new details about the layout and architecture of a complex of palaces and temples that briefly served as Japan's capital in ancient times.

Archeologists who have been excavating the site for decades recently found remains of a stone courtyard, a pond and holes for wooden pillars they believe were part of the residence of the Emperor, Temmu, who reigned from 672 until 686 and is remembered for establishing a centralized bureaucracy modeled on that of ancient China.

Previous digs had uncovered remains of walls, gates and other outlying parts of Temmu's palace, known as the Asuka Kiy-

omihara Palace, but never the emperor's residence itself, said Kiyohide Saito, a researcher with the Archaeological Institute of Kashihara-Nara.

Archeologists believe the courtyard, paved with more than 2,000 granite stones, and pond were part of a private garden adjoining a wooden palace that was 80 feet long and 40 feet wide.

"We were fuzzy about the layout of the complex," said Saito. "This find allowed us to pinpoint where the emperor actually lived—certainly the magnificence of the courtyard points to that."

Saito said earlier imperial palaces excavated to date did not have similar gardens on their grounds.

The Kiyomihara Palace is described in detail in the first official history of Japan, believed to have been started during Temmu's reign and completed about 40 years later in 720. It describes an elaborate complex with a hall of state, officials' quarters and an elaborate drainage system. AP

Thai premier sets revamp of Cabinet

BANGKOK—Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra prepared Tuesday to announce a Cabinet reshuffle, with the defense and interior ministers reported to be facing the sack over violence in the Muslim south.

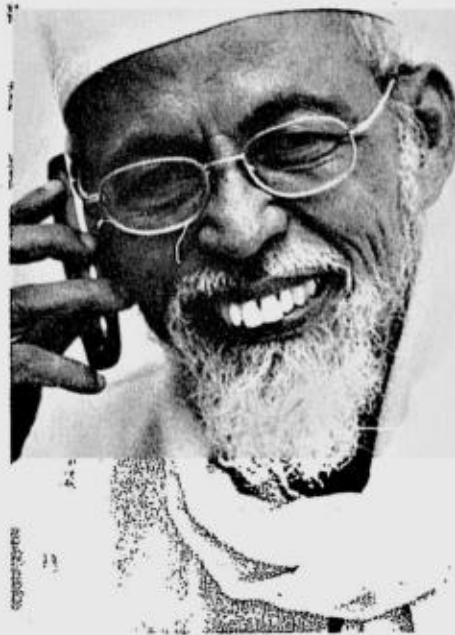
The new line-up has been submitted to King Bhumibol Adulyadej who must approve the changes before they are publicly announced.

"The prime minister submitted the list last night and it will be announced later today or maybe tomorrow. The new ministers will have a royal audience on Wednesday," cabinet secretary Bovornsak Unwantho told reporters.

The reshuffle, the eighth engineered by Thaksin since he came to power in a 2001 landslide election victory, comes ahead of general elections due to be held next February.

A government source said 12 ministers in 10 portfolios will be affected by the reshuffle, but he discounted reports that coalition partner Chart Pattana would be brought back into the Cabinet. AFP

Abu Bashir gets shorter jail term



BASHIR

JAKARTA—Indonesia's Supreme Court has cut the jail term of Muslim preacher Abu Bakar Bashir, accused of being spiritual head of the radical Jemaah Islamiyah network, to 18 months from three years, a court official said on Tuesday.

One security expert said the move sent the wrong signal about Jakarta's desire to fight terror, adding Bashir's likely release in the near future would embolden his supporters at a sensitive time just before Indonesia's elections this year.

Based on time served the 65-year-old Bashir, behind bars for immigration offences, could walk free within weeks. He was first detained in mid-October 2002, just days after the Bali bombings, an atrocity blamed on Jemaah Islamiyah.

Moegihardjo, head of the crimes division at the Supreme Court, said the judges agreed with a lower court's decision to uphold immigration and document forgery charges but to drop a treason charge against Bashir.

"The sentence was lowered from three years to one and a half years that will later be reduced by the time spent," Moegihardjo told Bashir supporters and reporters inside the court office.

He said the Supreme Court decided the lower court had imposed the incorrect jail term on Bashir. That court had already reduced his sentence to three years from four.

Around 100 Bashir supporters rallied at the Supreme Court, but there was no violence.

With elections in the world's most populous Muslim nation due this year, the Supreme Court decision could please conservative Muslim voters who have accused the West of forcing Jakarta to get tough with radical Islamists.

But it will likely draw fire from some Western and regional countries who blame the al-Qaida-linked JI for a spate of deadly bombings besides Bali. Those

countries, and foreign intelligence services, accuse Bashir of being the group's spiritual leader.

Ken Conboy, head of RMA Indonesia, a Jakarta-based security risk firm, said Bashir supporters inside and outside JI would get a boost from the move.

Some security experts have expressed concern JI or other militants could try and disrupt parliamentary elections due on April 5 and a presidential poll on July 5.

"When he was originally sentenced there was a sigh of relief among security officials that he was going to be out of the picture for quite some time, for a few years, and that once he emerged he would be contrite," Conboy said.

"I can only imagine that if he's out in a very short time he is going to be far from contrite. I think his supporters will be very emboldened."

Police have said Bashir provided inspiration to the perpetrators of the Bali

bombings that killed 202 people.

About 30 people, including many JI members, have been convicted for their role in the Bali attacks.

Some studied at an austere Muslim boarding school co-founded by Bashir in central Java in the early 1970s.

Bashir has denied terror accusations against him, but has called al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden a true Islamic warrior.

Security experts say JI has been weakened by numerous arrests in the past year, but that it still poses a threat. It wants to set up a pan-Southeast Asian Islamic state.

Jakarta has not ruled the group to be an illegal organization, in part, diplomats say, because President Megawati Sukarnoputri feels vulnerable to conservative Muslim politicians.

Bashir was cleared at his first trial in September of the main charge of heading JI.

Reuters

Zimbabwe seizes US cargo plane

HARARE—Zimbabwean authorities have seized a US-registered cargo plane carrying 64 "suspected mercenaries" and military equipment, Home Affairs Minister Kembo Mohadi said Monday.

The Boeing 727-100 was detained at Harare's main airport late Sunday after its owners allegedly made "a false declaration of its cargo and crew," Mohadi said at a news briefing.

"The plane was actually carrying 64 suspected mercenaries of various nationalities," Mohadi said. "Further investigations also revealed that on board was military material."

It was not immediately clear where the plane had come from, or what its purpose was.

Mohadi gave no further information, but said full details would be released once officials have established "the true identities of the men and their ultimate mission."

State-run television broadcast footage of a white plane with the tail number N4610. Inside the aircraft, the station showed two satellite telephones, radios, blue backpacks, sleeping bags, hiking boots, an inflatable raft, paddles, bolt cutters and what appeared to be a can of mace.

No weapons were shown, but the station said officials were still going through the cargo section.

AP

WORLD BRIEFS

Highest weather station

BEIJING—China is to build the world's highest weather station at an altitude of 17,490 feet on Mount Everest, state media reported Tuesday. The unmanned station will be completed within a year and will record temperature, humidity, air pressure, rainfall and wind speed, said Wang Jianshe, from the Tibet Weather Bureau in Lhasa. The unpredictable weather on Mount Everest, the world's highest peak, is currently monitored by a meteorological station 90 km away, raising the possibility of errors in forecasting for the treacherous mountain. Wang, cited by the Xinhua news agency, said the station was part of a drive to build an automatic monitoring network with 41 stations across Tibet. Some 20-odd expeditions each year seek to conquer the mountain. At least 72 people have died trying to reach the summit.

AFP

Rebuilding the Colosseum

ROME—The Colosseum will come full circle if one septuagenarian Roman gets his way. Architect Carlo Aymonino wants to rebuild the outer wall of the world's most famous amphitheater, once rocked by earthquakes and quarried to build other glories in the Eternal City. "It wouldn't be an Italian Disneyland. In fact it would be the exact opposite—a careful scientifically correct reconstruction," the 78-year-old said in an interview. His planned revamp could well become the next chapter in a long and often bitter debate about whether archaeological and artistic wonders should be left to succumb to the effects of time or be restored to their original beauty. The recent staging of pop concerts and art exhibitions in the Colosseum, where once the baying Roman mob feasted on gory gladiatorial battles, is proof that time for Italy's treasures has not stood still. Sitting in his studio, surrounded by sketches and models, the softly spoken Aymonino had more ammunition to use against those arguing for a hands-off approach to antiquity. Slaves sweated and toiled for about eight years to build the original Colosseum, which was inaugurated in 80 AD with a 100-day festival of ferocious warfare.

Reuters

Public kissing ban

JAKARTA—Kissing in public and erotic dancing could become punishable by five years in jail in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, if backers of proposed legislation get their way. In a related development, authorities on the country's Batam island said they plan to raid houses looking for cohabiting couples and make them get married, media reports said Tuesday. The proposals reflect religion's growing influence in this constitutionally secular country and will likely please Muslim clerics, who've long argued that the law should better reflect Islamic values. If approved, a new parliamentary bill would ban kissing on the lips and making love in public places. Erotic dancing, exposing oneself and "performing in, organizing or watching sex shows" would also become crimes, said Aisyah Hamid Baidlawi, who heads a house committee on pornography. Committee members have proposed the bill. "The bill aims to protect people from exploitation and promote morality and ethics," Baidlawi said on Tuesday.

AP



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Sold out

OUR national mythology is filled with stories of intrepid wanderers who arrived on our shores in *balanghai*. The Malay migrants were the most successful among the new arrivals in a country that continues to be influenced by arrivals seeking imperial glory, financial fulfillment or merely a new place to call home. We are, by all accounts, a peripatetic people. And since all emigration is born of seeking prosperity or trying to find refuge, many readers have asked why we cited Elmer Reyes Jacinto, who topped the most recent medical board exams, as a negative example—a "sellout."

Has he not worked hard to achieve his dreams? Does he not have the right to look for greener pastures? To both the answer must be yes. He is a man of achievement, and he is a man with initiative. He is furthermore heir to a national policy of pawning the lives of our enterprising and educated, in order to fund a nation run into the ground by Ferdinand Marcos and Blas Ople, who helped craft the government program of exporting Filipinos instead of Filipino products.

To the story of Jacinto can be added those of many others: of the scion of a hacendero family with two doctorates, who works as a domestic helper in New York, because she could not find work at home despite her qualifications; of a young Amerasian Filipino who only knows his US serviceman of a father as a tattered photograph, and who found his dreams of being a computer programmer crushed because the foundation funding his schooling pulled out, forcing him to try his luck in Japan as a dancer; of a Chinese-Filipino who defied his family by marrying a Malay-Filipina, only to end up in California to set up a new life after his mother was kidnapped. The stories of those who have studied, only to find no work, are legion. But almost as many are those who leave because they have no love of country, no respect for hard work, and who want to get rich quick.

Our nation was born of immigrants who built new lives here with the dream of making their new home permanently theirs—and their posterity's. If in the intervening centuries any development has occurred—from tribe to people, from people to nation—it has been because former migrants turned into citizens with a stake in the broader whole. If our leaders have let down the led, if the follies of dictators and their minions have resulted in fewer and fewer citizens having a stake worth living for, much less working for, we must ask: If those to whom the future belong do not reclaim their future, what hope is there left for our country?

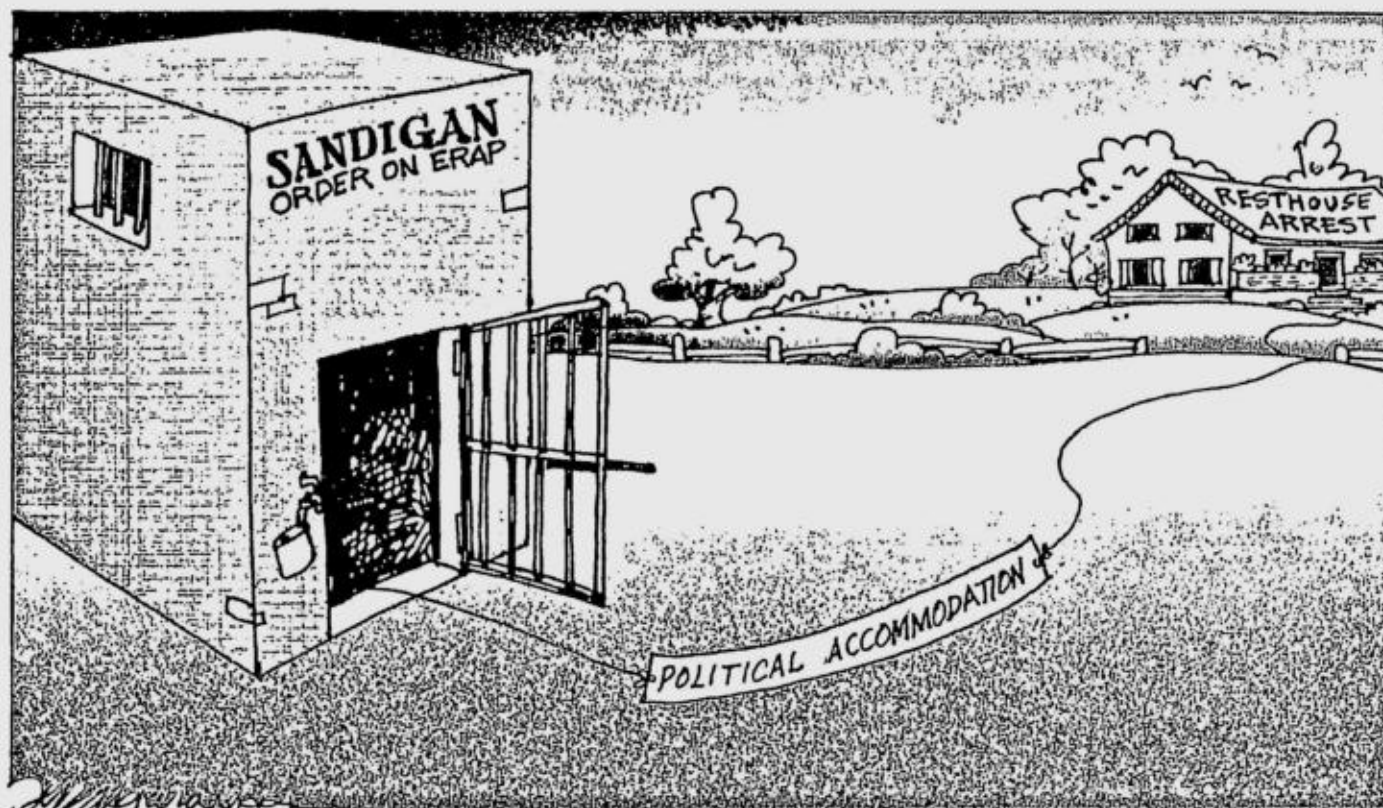
"Corruption among the best is the worst," the US president in the TV series "The West Wing" sadly says, upon hearing of a war hero turned crook. To which we might say, "Hopelessness among the best is the worst." While there are those who leave because they honestly find their destiny best served by doing so, there are the many who leave for the most selfish motives. And among the young, looking for a purpose in life, it is become more difficult to distinguish between those who leave in pursuit of an honorable dream, and those who leave in order to leapfrog over the conscientious and hard working.

Our leaders have pawned generations. There has been sufficient time for those who first fled the economic mismanagement and collapse of the Marcos years to fulfill their dreams of coming home to bring something back to the nation that had nothing to offer them. Too few have come back; and many among them ended up disappointed and even ruined.

A country that looks to the accomplished and the young for redemption sees, with every departure, the further crushing of an already glimmering hope. The corrupt and depraved leaders of the Marcos years are passing from the scene, but few good people are taking their place. And for these good leaders, their natural constituency continues to leave our shores. Our nation's stocks of competence, ability and hope are running out fast.

The time of dying for our country is long past, but the time of living for it—when will it come? Our nation's scarce resources have been invested in the generations that have already left, and are leaving. And we must ask those who are gone, and are going: Even if you come back, to what will you come back? What can you bring to a country so impoverished not just materially, but morally, that will make it worth coming back to?

Those who are leaving have dreams of their own that can best be fulfilled elsewhere. But with every departure, our chances diminish of putting an end to the cycle of bad governance and holding those who govern to account.



Day of the Generals at the 'Kapihan'

As I See It

Neal H. Cruz



IT was the Day of the Generals at the Kapihan sa Manila last Monday with retired generals backing rival presidential candidates as guests. The generals were representing different groups with names starting with AG (for Association of Generals) followed by three- or four-letter words. Hence, there are AGPoe, AGPing, and AGFour. AGPoe are of course the generals who support Fernando Poe Jr., AGPing, those who are for Ping Lacson, and AGFour those who back the administration K-4 ticket (ironically pronounced "Kay Poe" by the Chinese owner of the corner store who is rooting for Ping Lacson). There is neither an AGRoco nor an AGEddie, which can only mean that the other presidential candidates better not depend on help from the military.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon, a reelectionist candidate in the K-4 ticket and a former Armed Forces chief of staff, was the Kapihan guest speaking for the administration.

Retired Lt. Gen. Raul Urgello, former commanding general of the Philippine Army and AFP intelligence chief; Brig. Gen. Tomas Manlongat, former PC regional commander; and Brig. Gen. Jaime Canatoy of the Air Force, former commander of the AFP Civil Relations Service, are all members of AGPing.

Asked why the retired generals, who have similar backgrounds, education, training and experiences, are supporting different presidential candidates, they replied that their candidate stands for much-needed reforms in the government. For his part, Senator Biazon said President Macapagal-Arroyo happens to agree with his advocacies, foremost of which is reproductive health.

Told that save for the incumbent, all the presidential candidates are campaigning for reforms and changes in the government, so how does one differ from the others, the AGPing generals said their idol has a proven track record when he was chief of the PAOCTF and the Philippine National Police. To which I agree.

Lacson is the only police chief in a long time who was able to reduce, if not totally eliminate, the *katong* cops, reduce their hefty ab-

domens and make them fit to run after criminals, and reduce the number of their wives. Moreover, he is the only PNP chief who was able to make the police officers return to their owners stolen vehicles recovered by the police but which the officers themselves have been using for a long time as their own. Furthermore, Lacson was able to reduce the number of kidnappers, in more ways than one, and the drug trade was not so widespread during his time as it is now. In short, Lacson effectively waged war against criminality. His supporters say he is a real champion of peace and order: he was able to impose order and many criminals are now resting in peace. Also, he may have discovered an effective way of reducing the population explosion.

In contrast, now that Lacson is no longer in the PNP, the *katong* cops have returned with a vengeance, assisted by the *katong* traffic aides, and many policemen again look as if they're pregnant. Which is why snatchers and pickpockets have proliferated; they know they can outrun policemen anytime because the latter are carrying extra baggage in their abdomens.

Also, under the new dispensation, armed groups have gotten the habit of withdrawing large amounts of money from banks even if they have no deposits there. Others have developed a new lucrative industry which consists of taking rich people (mostly Chinese who don't know the better tourist spots) on short vacations and then letting them go home after their families pay for the cost of the vacation. Still, others have learned to compete with the multinational pharmaceuticals importing drugs by manufacturing the drugs right here,

in factories cleverly hidden in apartments and mansions in exclusive subdivisions.

Lacson will put an end, literally, to all that, said the AGPing sympathizers. Which no one can say for the candidates of AGPoe and AGFour.

Biazon was asked why he left the LDP-led opposition coalition to join the Roco ticket and then only a few days later dumped Roco and joined GMA's K-4 ticket.

"Well," replied Biazon, "it so happened that GMA and I see eye to eye on my five advocacies." I found that hard to believe because Biazon is a six-footer while GMA is only 4'11". It would have been more believable if Sen. Juan Flavio had said that instead.

"But why did you drop Roco like a hot potato?" Biazon was asked again.

"I would rather not say," replied Biazon who is, after all, still an officer and a gentleman, "but why don't you ask the mayors, governors, and congressmen of his native Bicol? They will tell you why."

The AGPing generals were asked if they would lobby for government appointments if Lacson becomes President.

They replied that they won't but that they would accept if they are offered positions.

"Why do they want to grab jobs away from civilians when they are already amply rewarded as retired military men?"

One reason is that they are still young when they are retired from the service, said one of the generals, and they don't want to spend the rest of their lives twiddling their thumbs. (Somebody whispered that they want to get away from their wives.)

"Why don't you play golf? When they are still in active service, many officers spend too much time playing golf instead of working. Now that they are retired, they have all the time to play golf."

Not all officers like golf, said the general. I personally find it silly chasing a little white ball to drop it in a little hole, and then after achieving that, taking the ball out again to hit it as far as one can and then chasing it all over again. Isn't that silly?

Cynical

(Conclusion)

PRAY, what is not cynical?

It is not cynical to tell the people you are not going to run but run anyway? That was what Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo did in December 2002, over the grave of Jose Rizal nothing less—literally, it was his death anniversary, our national hero who wrote "Mi Ultimo Adios," and proved true to "mi," "ultimo" and "adios." She vowed not to run again and gave the most formidable reasons for it. She said she was one of the biggest reasons for the Filipinos' disunity and strife. To run again would be to stoke the fires of that disunity and dissension and make sure the country would never heal.

So what happened half a year later? The disunity and strife disappeared at the very time we had an escalation of the war in Mindanao to include the MILF, the Oakwood mutiny, the Jose Pidal scandal, a takeover of a Naia tower, and the NPC-Lakas attempt to unseat the Chief Justice? From being this country's chief dissembler, GMA has suddenly become its chief assembler? Or its biggest hope there?

In fact, it is nothing more than a cynical attempt to con the public, based on the cynical—though accurate—premise that it has little capacity to remember promises. But it ups the ante on what is permissible in electoral politics, which is that you can lie barefacedly and get away with it.

Just as well, it is not cynical to dismiss Fernando Poe Jr. for having no claim to fame except fame and then get Noli de Castro to run as your running mate? GMA's problem each time she criticizes FPJ in that light is the same problem Loren Legarda has each time she criticizes—or is reported to do so although she denies it—De Castro in that light. It is the pot calling the kettle black. It is casting the first stone. It is accusing your enemy of the very sin you are guilty of.

More than that, it is not cynical to include Miriam Defensor-Santiago in your senatorial slate? The one person who stood in the way of ousting Erap, the one person who shrieked at

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros



the mob at Edsa to "Sugod! Sugod!" to Malacañang, the one person who put a gun on her table in front of the cameras and dared the authorities to arrest her after the riot at Mendiola? It would be cynical enough if you were just part of Edsa II. What would you call it if you were never part of Edsa II but simply its biggest beneficiary? Gratefulness?

It is not cynical to plunge the country into war, sending peasants fleeing from their homes in Basilan and other parts of Muslim Mindanao, in the name of fighting terror simply because that was popular and gung-ho in the wake of 9/11? It is not cynical to suspend civil rights, make national security the paramount obsession of the country, turn government over to warmongers, and help the United States invade another country because that is what George W. Bush wants? None of that, quite incidentally, is mentioned in GMA's campaign today. In small part because of the now overwhelming global unpopularity of that war and in great part out of fear of losing the Muslim vote. You would think none of the "You are with me or against me" ever happened.

But that is not the worst of it. It is not cynical to not have then and now raised a peep, a squeak, a howl at GMA's "war against terror," even as it violated the spirit of pluralism, diversity, respect for differences, independence, libertarianism and plain respect for human life that democracy holds dear? It is not cynical to overlook this, to ignore this, to act as though none of it ever happened, and say to those who do, ah, but you are being angry and cynical and contributing only to negativism? It is not cynical to embrace not just cowardice and servility

and mediocrity but deviousness and iniquitousness and, yes, utter cynicism itself?

There is nothing constructive and positive in standing blind before tyranny and saying there is nothing we can do about it, let us look for ways to get by, life goes on. There is nothing heroic and idealistic in standing mute before oppression and saying we are compelled to live with it, it is elections, let us embrace it as the best we can possibly have. They just suck.

Those who root for FPJ are not exempt from it, too. It is not cynical to forget we had an Erap surrounded by the same people who now surround FPJ and who once surrounded Marcos and brought this country to heel? It is not cynical to imagine a person whose capacity for heroism and courage and leadership has been tested only by villains on the silver screen, indeed who cannot spot villain and hero in real life to go by the company he currently keeps, can prove the messiah in a world without the screen? It is not cynical to indulge in the logic that this country, having been ravaged by shrewdness and cunning, we might as well settle for ignorance and dumbness?

The NGOs, the former activists and idealists, the people who made Edsa I and II possible are not exempt from it, too. It is not cynical to renege all our hopes in the elections, the way the poor renege all their hopes in the lotto and the saints, imagining them to be the source of our salvation? It is not cynical to do so and then go on to say you'll just settle for second best, for the lesser evil, for the less atrocious because the one you really want, the one your conscience bids you choose, has only an outside chance to win? It is not cynical to think that however all this turns out anyway, if things really go bad you can always join the one-fifth of the population that wants to, or can, leave the country and embrace mediocrity in lieu of misery?

No, I won't stop being angry before the elections and well after. It's the only thing that keeps me sane amid the madness and the farce. If not doing so is what has become the norm, the acceptable, the realistic, I'd rather be:

Cynical.

Campaign at a crossroads

THE 2004 election campaign has truly arrived at a crossroads on which a significant bloc of swing votes could turn the tide toward either President Macapagal-Arroyo or her closest rival, Fernando Poe Jr. Both are statistically tied at around 30 percent each, according to the latest opinion poll surveys.

The stalemate was first noted by both the Social Weather Stations and Pulse Asia in the middle of February, which marked the time when the President began to breeze past Poe, who had been leading her, but not by a wide gap, since the start of the campaign in the first week of February.

The surveys indicated a turning point in the campaign and blasted more than any other event the belief that he was pumped up with momentum and that there was no way of stopping it.

That punctured the bubble of invincibility and electability—a perception that is critical to the flow of campaign funds. The surveys exposed a chink in Poe's armor. Following the release of the SWS survey of Feb. 17-25 and of Pulse Asia's survey of Feb. 16-20—both of which put the President marginally ahead of Poe—the mood in both camps changed drastically. The surveys cast gloom for the first time in the Poe camp as they lifted morale dramatically in the administration side.

Demoralization is reflected by the statements of Poe himself and of his close associates. Sen. Vicente Sotto III, regarded as Poe's alter ego and front man, dismissed the survey which in the weeks before the turnaround in mid-February, had inflated the opposition's belief in the invincibility of Poe. Now, no one in the opposition camp is talking about "landslides" and "bandwagon." Sotto claims that the opposition has a more reliable measure of the popularity of its candidate. While he did not identify the new public opinion "system," the implication is that forthcoming surveys in the next few weeks are no longer regarded as harbingers of good news but of gloom. This means that the opposition is now back to its feedback system that gave it information from the "grass roots" it would like to believe in. This is fa-

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila



tal to any campaign because it creates unrealistic estimates of the public mood which has been shown to be volatile by poll tracking of public opinion. It was this feedback system that deluded the opposition powerbrokers to select Poe as its presidential candidate.

Electability is a matter of perception, especially to the people holding the money bags. They loosen up the purse strings when they perceive a landslide is in the making—which is not the case in this tight election. In the 1998 election, Joseph Estrada was polling around 40 percent in the surveys during the last four weeks, and campaign contributions were flooding his campaign chest. This is not the case with Poe. He has complained that his campaign chest has dried up, and he said he expected money to flow again following the Supreme Court decision upholding his Filipino citizenship.

To be sure, the citizenship case cast uncertainty over whether Poe could continue with his campaign, but there were more important reasons why money was not pouring in as he and his managers had expected. The uncertainty stems from other reasons, important of which was that the polls were showing that his campaign was flagging and losing momentum, that confidence in his capacity to govern was being eroded by his persistent refusal to engage in public debate over his policies and programs.

Poe's pro-poor campaign theme is showing signs of exhaustion. It worked for Estrada, but Estrada did not rely solely on the "Erap para sa mahirap" slogan. He had other things going for him, in addition to his movie-based popularity.

He was a successful town mayor of San Juan, a senator (who survived the Edsa-driven landslide of the Cory Aquino bandwagon in 1987) and was vice president of President Fidel Ramos who gave him wider public exposure and experience in public office by appointing him head of the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission.

The problems of the Poe campaign are found in the fact that its campaign theme is based on a very narrow issue—the pro-poor sloganeering. Estrada milked the issue dry and made it useless for anyone who followed after his administration was found to have done nothing to help the poor. Poe made the mistake of inheriting the populist legacy of Estrada—who passed on a rag of an issue to Poe. The disenchantment of the poor with Estrada has rubbed off on Poe. Estrada left Poe a heavy cross to bear.

Poe put himself into a hole by playing sedulous ape to Estrada and pegging his campaign on the poverty theme. His single-issue campaign excluded other issues that mattered not only to the middle and upper classes but also to the poor. This dedication to a single theme inhibited him from expanding his agenda of issues and explains why he has rejected demands calling for his engagement in public debate in which he has the chance to explain to the poor how he can deliver three meals to them each day. The poor, disappointed by Estrada, have had enough of these empty promises. Time and again, it has been shown that the poor cannot be sold down the river all the time. They also learn lessons after they have been betrayed.

Unless Poe broadens his agenda beyond the pro-poor theme, his campaign is doomed to be freighted down and sink by its weight.

In the heat of the close election, the debate has now shifted to a key issue that is devastating to Poe. The issue is over his competence to run the country. His rivals are all hammering on this. His popularity derived from his exposure in film and is insufficient to overcome the damage of the competence issue.

One woman's letter

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



colleagues said 'I heard the president said he wanted to be seen more with women this year; was that what that was about?'

Her complaint against the bank goes beyond inequities in pay and recognition. Indeed, Poole says that "I have been well compensated for my services. Too well for the type of menial, non-strategic work to which I have been assigned of late. My complaints against ADB are ethical, not financial. My frustrations at being unheard and underutilized have culminated this week after I was asked to perform a 'Vanna White' type of ceremony, passing recognition tokens to the vice president who handed them on; not even asked to shake the hands of the people who received them. I was invited on stage because of the common knowledge that the manager is always concerned about the appearance of gender balance."

THOUGH she is a single parent with four children, one of whom is studying in Canada, Poole says she has put her and her family's financial security at risk if only "to embarrass the bank... into paying more than lip service to hard issues such as gender mainstreaming."

In her years of work with ADB, she stresses, she has met and worked with "a great number of extraordinary, wonderful, hard working and sensitive men... who practise gender inclusion naturally. There are a large number of men in power at ADB who do not." And though she is not known for speaking out or even "taking strong gender stances, except perhaps by example," she has spoken up and left the organization because "I am simply fed up."

ADB, she declares, "simply must transform itself into a model for what it preaches." Good minds are not used nearly as well as they could be

in the bank, she reveals, "simply because they are packaged in a female body."

She might have left ADB by now, but Penelope Poole has done the women—and men—at ADB, and the people they are supposed to be helping, a huge favor. But only if ADB management pays heed to her message. ***

LAST Sunday, residents of Barangay Bankal, Lapu-lapu City in Cebu held the launching of their Five-Year Development Plan, the fruit of an almost year-long process of gathering various sectors in the community to consult them on what they think their neighborhoods need and what they themselves can contribute to the development of the entire barangay.

Some 400 residents gathered at the launching, attended also by local government officials, led by Barangay Chair Eduardo Cuizon, and a few representatives of the business community and NGO.

The development plan is part of a local governance project called "Instituting the Values of Participatory Democracy in the Barangay." The process of formulating such a plan began last August with the signing of a memorandum of agreement between the barangay officials and the Cebu Labor Education Advocacy and Research Center or Clear, which would conduct the consultations and training on participatory democracy. Bankal was selected among the 30 barangays of Lapu-lapu, said Pepe Gasapo, Clear director, because of the strong support expressed by Cuizon, the president of a workers' union that Clear had assisted.

Bankal has close to 10,000 residents, with an internal revenue allotment of about P1.7 million. The five-year development plan, formulated through open and comprehensive consultations with all stakeholders in the community, is an excellent example of public and private partnership in "engaging local government units to strengthen LGUs' accountability to the people as well as promote transparency in the delivery of public services."

Congratulations to Clear and to the people and officials of Barangay Bankal!

Progress and Baguio and Tagaytay

LAST weekend I noticed that there is so much building going on in Tagaytay which normally would be a sign of "progress," but then if this is not controlled early Tagaytay will deteriorate like Baguio. Every time I drive by the ridge and try to catch a glimpse of the volcano in the lake I find it more difficult because the view is blocked by all the houses and business establishments along the road. A room with a view is now a premium in Tagaytay and this should not be the case. The view of Taal should be part of our heritage and if protective measures and zoning were in place earlier, perhaps people could have been discouraged from obstructing the view, but that is now water under the bridge. It will take great effort to give us back a view that should be part of our heritage. I noticed the same thing along the beautiful road by the sea in Gumaca, Quezon. This view can also be protected and preserved for all Filipinos, but with houses slowly being built on the sea-side part of the road this will soon be history.

I have yet to visit Baguio again and listen to Ms De Guia and Ms Afable, the grand old ladies behind a campaign to save the City of Pines. With everyone cooperating, the scent of pine that used to signal our entry into the city can be brought back because now that scent is but a memory for people my age or older. My nephew and nieces might not even get to see real trees in Baguio following the rapid "development" of the city. It worries me to even imagine that children will grow up not knowing what real trees are like and be content with the concrete pine tree on Session Road. Wouldn't it have been cheaper and more meaningful to plant and maintain a real tree on that spot?

The Baguio Country Club will be celebrating its centennial in 2005 and while the present club is not the wooden structure I remember from my childhood, perhaps it can be a focus for remembering what Baguio used to be and what Baguio should be today. By putting a face and story behind Wright Park, Burnham Park or Kennon Road, we begin the process of remembering and

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo



do our part to save Baguio.

Who was Col. L.W.V. Kennon the army engineer, the man behind the road that brings us up to Baguio? What did he look like? What was he like? The story begins with William Howard Taft (who is on the road to obscurity thanks to a Senate bill that changed Taft Avenue in Manila to Diokno Avenue), the first American civil governor who heard of Baguio from Dean C. Worcester but entrusted the development of the summer capital to William Cameron Forbes (now remembered for Governor Forbes Street in Sampaloc and, of course, Forbes Park in Makati) who delegated the road project to Kennon. The Benguet Road (now Kennon Road) cost US \$2,754,281.05 when it was completed in 1905. That is almost one-tenth of what the US paid for the Philippines in 1898!

What is also generally unknown is that Forbes got the men to work by placing a bet that the road would not be finished by Jan. 30, 1905. Thus motivated, the men worked overtime and got Kennon to travel up the road on a carromata one day before the deadline. Thus Forbes in his diary, noted down the money he burned on the bet, informing Kennon that he sent:

"Ten kegs of San Miguel Beer which are to be delivered one to each Camp on your road the 31st of January 1905."

"One small keg of whiskey, which is to be delivered to you personally. I request that you do not drink the whole of it yourself in one day."

"20,000 cigars in boxes of 100 each, to be known as the Benguet Road Cigar, which are to

be distributed among your camps in proportion to the population of each camp."

"3,000 packages of cigarettes, which are to be known as Benguet Cigarettes, also for such distribution."

"In addition to these I have ordered 250 cigars with the Benguet ring on them of the kind known as 'Favoritos J. Dortes,' and 250 of the 'Incomparables,' in all 500 cigars. Four boxes of each of these varieties are for your personal consumption, the rest are to be divided among the officers of the Road."

"There are in addition 500 other cigars, 250 of the 'Favoritos Antonio Correa' and 250 'Regalia Gustavo Pereira' in boxes of 50 each, in all ten boxes. One of each is to be given to each foreman on your Road as a special gift to him. These are specials for the bosses."

"I think you have done your share in the matter and hope you will think I have done mine."

I did not realize at first that Baguio had such an interesting and colorful history. It only takes a centennial to make us stop from our labors and look back. The sad part is that Daniel Burnham, when he designed Baguio, wrote this a century ago:

"The placing of formal architectural silhouettes upon the summits of the surrounding hills would make a hard skyline and go far towards destroying the charm of this beautiful landscape. On the other hand, to place buildings on the sloping hillsides where they would be seen against a solid background of green foliage is to give them the best possible setting without mutilating their surroundings. The preservation of the existing woods and other plantings should be minutely looked after... Unless early protective measures are taken the misdirected initiative of energetic lumbermen will soon cause the destruction of this beautiful scenery."

History is not just talking about the past, it can also be a way to engage the present and the future.

Comments are welcome at aocampo@atenio.edu

'Tikim'

WATCHING Dong Puno's show the other night, which focused on the credibility of public opinion surveys, I felt the survey firms' representatives (I recognized Mahar Mangahas and Mercy Abad) were practically thrown to the lions with the way the audience grilled them about the surveys.

It was clear that hostilities from the audience came mainly from supporters of candidates who were not doing too well in the surveys (e.g., Ping Lacson and Brother Eddie) or whose previously high ratings were dropping (e.g., FPJ).

But others had very legitimate questions about survey questions. How, they asked, could samples of 1,200 (or 2,400) represent the entire country? And of course there was the classic question, "How come I've never been surveyed?" More dramatically, when Puno asked the audience—which was quite a large crowd gathered at Marikina's Riverbanks—who had been surveyed, everyone claimed they had never been asked, proof, as far as many of them were concerned, that the surveys were being doctored.

The researchers valiantly tried to explain what random sampling means but I felt the audience just wasn't catching on, partly because they didn't want to understand the process and partly because the explanations were too academic. In the end, people seemed unconvinced, if not more cynical.

As someone who has to teach survey methods several times a year to different groups—from university students to NGO staff—let me try to explain what we mean by sampling, which is the very core of the survey process. The other issues raised about surveys are, unfortunately, much too complex to handle in one column so I won't deal with them today.

I always start off a survey lecture by asking people what they do first before buying fruits. The answer is simple: *tikim*. *Tikim* is a taste test; *tikim* is, well, sampling.

"How do you sample?", I ask next. Would you trust a sample offered by the vendor? Many of course say they wouldn't because they know the vendor will choose the best of the day's produce for customers to sample, which may not necessarily reflect the quality of the rest of the stuff being sold.

What the vendor does, picking out the best fruit, is a convenience sample. Which is the way many students will do a survey for a term paper, their sample consisting of whoever is available, which would be relatives, friends and neighbors. The results of such surveys cannot be generalized to a larger population so I tell my students they shouldn't bother coming up with fancy statistics.

Politicians sometimes hire less reputable survey firms to do these convenience samples, intentionally focusing on a community where the candidate is known to be strong, to show they are leading the race.

A scientific survey uses a random sample, random meaning that every member of a group has an equal chance of being selected, much like sweepstakes or lotto numbers. Notice how the numbers are inscribed on balls which are turned around.

If I may get back to the *tikim* metaphor, what you'd do in the market is randomly choose a bunch of fruits, say lanzones, to sample if you want to buy lanzones. (Obviously, you're not going to sample a bunch of mangosteen to make you decide about the lanzones, but that again is what happens with bad surveys.)

From that bunch of lanzones, you again randomly pick out a lanzones for a taste test. Even if you've sampled only one lanzones from a bunch, you're usually reasonably sure the whole bunch is all right, but of course you can always ask the vendor if you can take one or two more.

The larger the number of lanzones you taste from the bunch—randomly selected of course—the greater your certainty that the bunch is good. This is what statisticians call level of certainty, or sometimes, the margin of error. This is sometimes expressed as a p-value; for example, you will find figures that is accompanied by something like "p<0.01". What that means is that you are 99 percent sure about finding a difference in your statistics (or your lanzones).

I sometimes kid my students about asking their boyfriends or girlfriends to express their love in terms of p-values, i.e., "Tell me how certain are you that you love me?" I ask my students, too, what an acceptable p-value would be. In surveys, a "p<0.05", meaning 95 percent certainty, is usually acceptable but of course my students, being young, demand 100 percent certainty. That, it seems, is how Filipino voters interpret our surveys—they think the numbers are a 100 percent reflection of reality. This is impossible to achieve short of sampling all voters. Using our lanzones metaphor, you would have to taste the entire bunch before you can be 100 percent certain, which will make for a very unhappy vendor.

People are of course different from lanzones. Maybe we're more like those strawberries being sold by street hawkers to motorists. They show you packs with big luscious fruits but all you can do is an ocular sampling, wondering if the bottom of the pack contains mashed, even rotten fruits.

Obviously, with maybe about 30 million eligible Filipino voters, you can't have a survey to ask each and everyone of them. Statisticians have figured out the sample of 1,200 or 2,400 is sufficient. I know that sounds almost incredible but similarly small samples are used by Gallup and other American polling firms, and that's for a country with about 80 million eligible voters. Increasing the samples to say, 50,000, will increase the level of certainty but not that much more. It just becomes cost-ineffective.

When the public opinion firms do their surveys, they randomize populations at all levels. This is done first at the provincial level, maybe choosing 10 out of 76 provinces. Then for the randomly selected provinces, they again randomize and choose a number of municipalities, then barangays, households, all the way to household members.

Because of all these randomization procedures, you can see why the chances of your being surveyed are quite slim. That shouldn't be reason for you to feel bad or cheated; eventually, what counts most is your vote in the election itself.

Comments to miguel@pinoykasi.net

THEY SAID

Punishing the child

"To disqualify an illegitimate child from holding an important public office is to punish him for the indiscretion of his parents. There is neither justice nor rationality in that."

—Fr. Joaquin Bernas, one of the four "friends of the court" invited by the Supreme Court to shed light on the disqualification case against presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

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UP Charter Bill not 'killed'

THIS is in connection with the Analysis article titled "Malice prevails over reason in the Senate" by Amando Doronila last Feb. 23 regarding the current status of Senate Bill 2587, or the bill that seeks to amend the charter of the University of the Philippines.

Despite the near-hysterical public lamentations from incumbent UP president Francisco Nemenzo, the bill has not been "killed" in the Senate. In fact, it will be scheduled for further deliberation on the Senate floor when Congress resumes its session after the May 10 elections.

I certainly disagree with the conclusion of Nemenzo that the failure of the Senate to approve the measure before it adjourned last Feb. 6 "dashed all hopes of bringing the UP Charter into the 21st century."

Either Nemenzo has become too emotional about the issue or he has conveniently forgotten that legislation, such as amending the UP Charter for the first time since 1908, is a tedious and comprehensive process.

The fact is, during a Senate caucus before we adjourned, the majority of the senators wanted more time to further improve the bill and agreed that it should be listed

as a priority item when Congress resumes sessions in May.

It is inaccurate for Nemenzo to say that I failed to support the passage of the bill. It seems he has forgotten also that I am one of the principal sponsors of the measure.

Likewise, his accusation that Sen. John Osmenia was blocking the passage of the bill due to personal and malicious reasons is too simplistic and unfair.

We, in the Senate, only wish the best for UP. However, it is our responsibility to see to it that we legislate a new UP Charter that will ensure a better administration for the university.

For the record, not only Osmenia has raised questions regarding the UP Charter Bill. Sen. Joker Arroyo, who declared that while he has complete confidence in the integrity of the current UP leadership under Nemenzo, wanted to know what measures will be in place to prevent future UP officials from abusing their new powers to sell UP assets. During Senate hearings, Arroyo lamented that "UP officials have not been able to give concrete answers, proposals and amendments."

The questions raised by Osmenia are legitimate and relevant,

like his concern over the heavy concentration of resources in the UP main campus in Diliman, Quezon City to the detriment of other UP campuses in the provinces.

It is a tradition in the Senate that you cannot close the debate on a particular issue for as long as a member of the chamber has questions to pursue. This tradition is revered not only in the Philippine Senate but also in parliaments of other democracies in the world.

Senate Bill 2587 is not the only bill that is pending when Congress adjourned. There are other equally, if not more important bills, that are pending in the Senate agenda because of issues raised by senators and will have to be thoroughly debated on.

All things considered however, I would like to assure the public that the Senate will not fail in its mandate to empower UP to be able to fully fulfill its task of educating the best of our students and achieving the highest academic standard of excellence that we seek.

—FRANKLIN M. DRILON,
Senate president,
6/F Senate of the Philippines,
GSIS Building,
Financial Center, Pasay City



Not even informed of SSS decision

BECAUSE my complaint regarding the nine-year-old Employees' Compensation Commission death claim of the heirs of the late Vicente T. Fuentespina appeared in the INQUIRER in the second week of January 2004, the Social Security System was finally obliged to act on it.

However, the orphaned children would like to voice their displeasure that the SSS medical operation department deliberately failed to inform them about the SSS decision denying their claim.

Simple due process required the SSS to furnish the claimants a copy of its decision as part of its quasi-judicial function but this was deliberately omitted by the SSS. It was instead the ECC who informed the claimants about the SSS denial of their claim.

At a time when the SSS is buffeted by many accusations, including the juggling of ECC funds, the protection of the rights of its members is paramount.

—MANUEL V. YANSON,
Prk. Yanson, Erereco,
6100 Bacolod City

BenguetCorp mines not abandoned or neglected

IN THE FEB. 10 edition of the INQUIRER, it was reported that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources will rehabilitate inactive and abandoned mines. Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun was quoted as saying that the rehabilitation program is aimed at restoring the natural environment in mined-out areas and turning idle mines into productive government assets once again. Among those identified as inactive and abandoned mines are the following mining properties of Benguet Corporation, namely: Antamok mines and Benguet Gold Operation in Itogon, Benguet and Coto (Masinloc) mines in Masinloc, Zambales.

BenguetCorp is taking strong exception to the report, which gives the erroneous impression that the above projects have been abandoned and/or neglected by the company. In the interest of truth and for the information of the investing public, BenguetCorp makes the following clarifications:

- Contrary to the report, the Masinloc mine is neither abandoned nor inactive. It continues to operate as it has done so for the last 70 years. The Masinloc mine boasts of the best preserved and maintained natural environment in the industry.

- BenguetCorp has resumed mining in the Benguet Province with the reopening of Acupan using a novel approach which is contract mining in partnership with small-scale mining cooperatives. This project has allowed the additional employment of 1,000 people from the communi-

ty. With the recent rise in prices of metals, particularly gold, BenguetCorp is looking to expand its production.

- BenguetCorp is also proud to announce that it is currently participating in the ongoing bidding conducted by the Baguio Water District for the supply of bulk water to Itogon and Baguio City. In an example of BenguetCorp's commitment to sustainable development, the mined-out open pit in Antamok is being proposed to be converted into a water reservoir for this project.

- The Dizon (copper) mine has been turned over by BenguetCorp to its claim owner, Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc. (DCSMI) since 1997. DCSMI has assumed total responsibility and control of the mine since then.

BenguetCorp continues to be supportive of the policy of the government to protect the environment through sustainable and responsible mining. However, it should be emphasized that the viability of any mining project, whether new or revival of old mines, depend upon the availability of capital from local and foreign sources. The attractiveness of the industry for mining investors to come in is determined by the consistency of government economic policies and the proper interpretation of conflicting laws and regulations.

—REYNALDO R. MENDOZA,
vice president-legal and
assistant corporate secretary,
Benguet Corporation,
3/F One Corporate Plaza,
845 Arnaiz Avenue,
1223 Makati City

Indian buffalo meat, not carabao meat

MAY I react to the letter of Albert T. Lim Jr., president of one faction of the National Federation of Hog Farmers Inc. last March 8 which mentioned me and my company.

I will not touch on Lim's personal commitment and conviction in raising pigs. He is clearly entitled to them. I will also not touch on his *argumentum ad hominem*. There is no sense discussing it. What I would like to point out is the gross misrepresentation of facts that his group has foisted on the general public for so long.

He says hog farmers want to stop carabao meat importation "to protect the hog industry and other vulnerable livestock from foot and mouth disease (FMD)" and that "importing Indian carabao meat is a definite risk."

Both are an oversimplification of issues. Let me point out the following:

1. The carabao from India which Lim is talking about is actually the *murrah* breed of buffalo which is raised for meat and milk just like cattle, in contrast to the local carabao which is used to plow the fields. Thus, there is hardly any comparison in terms of meat quality. The *murrah* is closer to cattle meat (beef) than to the local carabao's.

2. The international trade in Indian buffalo meat (Lim's carabao) in its present form—frozen, deboned and deglanded—is sanctioned by the Office International des Epizooties (OIE) which is the only international authority on animal health issues recognized by the World Trade Organization.

The export-import of Indian buffalo meat is in accordance with the pertinent provisions of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code which the Philippine government approved along with other WTO members.

3. By following the guidelines of the OIE Animal Health Code, OIE director general Bernard Vallat assured the Philippine Department of Agriculture in December 2003 that the continued importation of Indian buffalo meat does not pose any risk of transmission of the FMD to the livestock population in the Philippines.

4. The present restriction on buffalo meat discriminates against Muslims in Mindanao, in Quiapo and elsewhere who want to bring in Indian buffalo meat from Sabah which sells it openly

in public markets. Sabah is FMD-free and so is the nearby state of Sarawak. They don't eat pork, so why not let them eat buffalo meat? They should decide what, where and when to eat, not Lim or his group.

Having said so, I now challenge Lim and his group to disprove the scientific findings of the OIE. If he and his group are able to come up with their own results to the contrary, I will gladly join him and his group in having Indian buffalo meat banned. If they fail to do so, I will seek court action to force the issue.

—SAMUEL V. SEÑOREN,
chair, CSP International
Commodities Corp.,
18/F Prestige Tower,
Emerald Avenue,
Ortigas Center, Pasig City

Proper rotunda driving

THE QUEZON City Circle is my favorite road because it is 10 lanes wide and there is no traffic most of the time. However, what irritates me are those drivers who enter the circle by crossing nine lanes in nine seconds! Not only is this dangerous, it also slows down everyone. It also gives everyone the impression that you don't know how to drive properly.

The safest and easiest way for someone entering the Quezon City Circle from any road is to simply turn right first and slowly but surely, using the signal light, go to the middle lane and eventually to the innermost lane. No wonder people don't appreciate this fast-moving rotunda.

—SIMON PAVEL T. MIRANDA,
8 Love, Tierra Evelina, Culiat, QC

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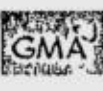
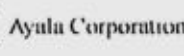
An amazingly affordable P5,000 net conference fee for Philippine-based participants, and US\$300 for foreign registrants.

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In the Business of Empowering Growers

syngenta Philippines to Boost RP Agriculture Through Innovative Agribusiness

Syngenta Philippines, a leading agribusiness firm in the country, has expressed its strong determination in uplifting the status of Philippine agriculture through its innovative crop solutions, hybrid seeds and biotechnology.

During the Syngenta National Conference held last February 23 to 27 in Davao City, Syngenta Philippines, a world-leading agribusiness committed to sustainable agriculture through innovative research and technology, underscored the need to strengthen Philippine agriculture and to contribute to this cause.

The National Conference was graced by Davor Pisk, Syngenta Regional Head for Asia-Pacific. As a major corporate event of Syngenta Philippines being a part of a worldwide network of leading agribusiness firms, the conference took on the challenges of global competitiveness and technological advancements through its delivery of empowering solutions to local crop growers.

"This is an important market for us. One of the things we are doing is identifying the different types of customers. At the top of our segmentation pyramid is the corporate account the plantation growers. The oil palm plantation in Malaysia, rubber plantations in Indonesia or banana plantation here in the Philippines. They represent a very important segment for Syngenta and we want to make sure that we're meeting our clients' needs. We need to make sure that we understand clearly what they need from us so we provide them with the best solutions we possibly can," said Davor Pisk.

Attended by 55 Syngenta personnel and 23 Syngenta clients and partner distributors from all over the Philippines, the conference became a venue for Syngenta to layout its blueprint for Philippine agriculture. It was also a time for corporate reviews and strategic

planning for the company.

"It is our aim to improve our corporate standing from the challenges Syngenta encountered in 2003 with massive and intensive drought affecting local agriculture. And in 2004, we are confident and determined to gear all our efforts to a strong rebound, while Syngenta remains steadfast in its commitment to take part in the development of our local agriculture," said Edgar Juan Surtida III, Syngenta Philippines President.

Syngenta provides state-of-the-art technologies that are relevant to Philippine farming. "Technology moves on. If Syngenta does not develop technology in this area, somebody else will. We cannot afford to say we will not develop something because it would harm the business. Because that is just trying to manage yesterday's business rather than the future," said Pisk.

Syngenta's existing programs for farmer upliftment has always been a top priority for Syngenta. "In the conference, we don't only talk of sales targets and growth. We think in terms of leveraging on our capability to extend our services beyond conventional sales. Syngenta Philippines supports the farmers through social and economic means," said Surtida.

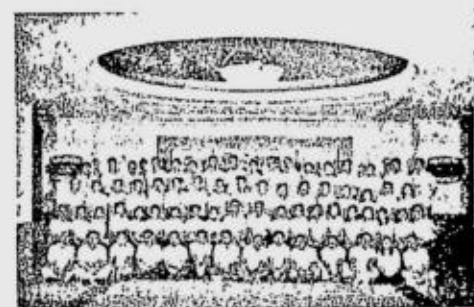
"More than ever, Syngenta reaches out to subsistence farmers to help them improve their farming capabilities and ultimately their lives and integrity in the profession of farming. With Syngenta's reliable and integrated solutions, we are looking at a brighter future for Philippine agriculture," said Surtida.



◀ Syngenta Phils. President Edgar Juan Surtida III presents SPI's corporate goals for 2004



▶ Celso Alejo Enriquez (middle), Sr. Field Advisor of GEM receives recognition from Syngenta Philippines



◀ The Growing Syngenta Philippines family during the Syngenta National Conference in Davao City



Hats-off to Agri Partners

As a gesture of appreciation and recognition, Syngenta Philippines, Inc. honored various industry leaders in Philippine agriculture who have been instrumental in the continued development of the farming sector in the country.

In a recognition and awarding ceremony coinciding with the Syngenta National Conference last February 26 in Davao City, Syngenta Philippines awarded its partners and key agriculture movers as they have extended valuable support to the growth and advancement of the farming industry.

"These partners and individuals are actively involved in developing agriculture in their own industries, and Syngenta is grateful for their support as we move with concerted efforts towards the goal of improving the agricultural sector," said Roel Z. Castro, Syngenta Philippines Marketing Manager.

Syngenta recognized the Philippine Banana Growers and Exporters Association (PBGEA) for its continuous and determined effort to develop and expand the Philippine banana industry with proactive programs leading towards the protection of the environment and the farming communities in their locale.

Dr. Hernani Golez, Chief of the National Mango Research and Development of the Agriculture Department, was also recognized for promoting off-season mango technologies in the Philippines. Celso Alejo H. Enriquez of the Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) Program II was likewise honored with the same citation and for creating market linkage for local mango producers.

For supporting the cause of developing the vegetable industry in Northern Mindanao and for linking the growers of Mindanao to institutional markets in Metro Manila, Syngenta also recognized Jasmin Agbon of GEM.

Nissin Monde District Sales Head Francis M. Oraiz and National Sales and Marketing Director Rufino Tiam Lee were also recognized as they were instrumental in the forging of a mutually beneficial partnership between Syngenta and Nissin Monde and in supporting Syngenta's Agri-skewela and PaSADA projects in 2003. They have likewise provided logistical support to the rice technology seminars conducted by Syngenta in 2003.

"These partners have made a difference in the agriculture sector as they have greatly contributed to the same cause that Syngenta is advocating for," said Castro.

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: Farmer Support Team

Being a total solutions provider goes more than the solutions one sells. There is more to just sales and marketing as agribusiness deals not just with accounts, but also operates on a social dimension that is tangible and real.

Syngenta Philippines is cognizant that it is not just a company selling crop solutions, providing high yield seeds and engaging in biotechnology. As its vision states, Syngenta takes part in the advocacy of empowering growers. And throughout its existence, Syngenta has maintained a commitment to deliver on its social responsibility.

The Roots: Syngenta Foundation, Inc.

Syngenta Foundation, Inc. (formerly Ciba-Geigy Foundation, Inc.) is a non-stock, non-profit service organization of Syngenta Philippines, Inc. (SPI). The Foundation has been in operation since 1990 based at Ciba-Geigy's Crop Productivity and Farmers Training Center (CPFTC) at Barangay La Fuente, Sta. Rosa, Nueva Ecija.

Through its flagship program, the Farmer Support Team or FST, Syngenta Foundation embarked on a noble cause in training Filipino farmers, aiming to increase their level of understanding on Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Integrated Crop Management (ICM).

By year 2000, FST has trained more than 20,000 farmers from Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, Isabela, Iloilo and South Cotabato. From IPM and ICM courses, Syngenta Foundation's role has evolved. It is now at the forefront of Filipino crop grower empowerment.



FST Farmer Partners

Research studies consistently show that the most effective change agent in agriculture is a co-farmer. To leverage on this, Syngenta organized around 2,200 FST Farmer Partners from major rice and vegetable producing areas in the Philippines.

The Farmer Partner Program supports the government's drive for a sustainable increase in production. The role of Farmer Partners is primarily influencing co-farmers in adapting the Syngenta crop solutions.

Activities like Syngenta's Kapihan sa Barangay, FST Trade Fairs, and Demo Tours become venues for FST Farmer Partners in sharing their skills on new farming technologies.

Total Crop Management

To further strengthen the knowledge base of the FST Farmer Partners, the Total Crop Management or TCM training course was instituted. TCM is a 21-week training course. The participants of this course attend classroom and learning field training once a week, and spend the rest of the week implementing the technologies learned.

The Department of Agriculture, Partner Universities, National Food Authority, Department of Trade and Industry and the Cooperative Development Authority are among the agencies tapped to provide lectures for TCM.

As part of an agreement prior to the start of formal TCM classes, a participant must be willing and able to render agricultural and FST services to his/her co-farmers.

As graduates of this course, participants are referred to as FST Advisors, providing up-to-date and sound agricultural advice to co-farmers. There are around 800 FST Advisors nationwide as of December 2003.

FST Services

The Farmer Support Team program of Syngenta has extended numerous service-oriented activities to Filipino farmers. Aside from IPM, ICM, Seed Growers seminars and Total Crop Management course, Syngenta is also providing soil analysis, sprayer repairs, field diagnostics and demo-tours to FST farmer partners and other FST-trained farmers.

To provide greater access to these FST services, Syngenta deployed four units of FST Mobile Agri-Clinics (Nueva Ecija, Isabela, Iloilo and South Cotabato). These Mobile Clinics are equipped with audio-visual and soil laboratory equipment.

Providing social technology has also been part of FST services, as leadership, networking and team building became important components for the sustenance of FST Cooperatives and Associations.

FST Partner Universities

To sustain and further improve the services rendered to Filipino farmers and to Philippine agriculture as a whole, Syngenta entered into partnership with agriculture-based state colleges and universities (SCU).



◀ 1st FST Partner Universities Conference in CLSU, Munoz, Nueva Ecija



▶ Syngenta Regional Head for Asia-Pacific Davor Pisk during the Syngenta National Conference

The resulting synergy between the partnership of Syngenta and these universities became cornerstones for FST's more innovative approaches. As of January 2004, a total of 13 state colleges and universities signed memorandum of agreement with Syngenta. Sharing of resources between Syngenta and these institutions is the key to this partnership. SCUs provide facilities like demo farms for new technologies and knowledge transfers to Farmer Partners.

Moreover, the FST scholarship program was likewise implemented for partner universities. These scholarships were primarily for the beneficiaries of FST Farmer partners. To date, there are a total of 132 FST scholars enrolled in 21 SCUs nationwide.

Last February 9 to 11, the 1st FST Partner Universities Conference was held at CLSU in Nueva Ecija. Together with 12 Partner Universities who have signified support for the FST, Syngenta Foundation strengthened its stand and commitment to the program with various projects and undertakings for FST. At present, Syngenta Foundation is looking forward to 10 more SCUs to support the FST program.

And through the years, the FST gains more support from its partners and both government and private sector. Its successful programs yield success stories in every area where it is present. It is Syngenta's valuable contribution to the cause of sustainable agriculture and professionalizing the farming industry.

Regional Head Visits RP

Davor Pisk, the head of the Asia-Pacific Region of Syngenta, visited the Philippines last February 23 in time for Syngenta Philippines' National Conference in Davao City. His visit also coincided with meetings with various key stakeholders and partners of the company.

Mr. Pisk is an expert in the field of crop protection management as he gained extensive practical knowledge from his assignments all over the world. In Asia, Davor Pisk has notable working knowledge of agriculture in Japan, Hongkong and now, Singapore. Born in Croatia and educated in the US and Britain, he is presently the secretary of Crop Life Asia, having previously served as Vice-President.

During his visit, Pisk had a chance to meet some members of the local press in Manila before proceeding to Davao for the National Conference of Syngenta. He made a presentation on the corporate standing of Syngenta in the Asia-Pacific region and he reported on the corporate directions of the company.

In Davao, Mr. Pisk held a meeting with the members and officers of the Philippine Banana Growers and Exporters Association (PBGEA) to discuss trends in the banana industry, research undertakings and matters on how to improve production with the help of Syngenta Philippines.

In a meeting with Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM), a Project of USAID, represented by Deputy Chief of Party John Dalton, Jasmin Agbon and Celso Alejo Enriquez, Sr. Field Advisors, Davor Pisk discussed Syngenta's efforts to improve on traceability in the food and feed chain. Both Syngenta and GEM expressed interest in making this technology available to small growers exporting mango to export markets like US, Japan, China and Korea.

The group also agreed to jointly hold trainings on off-season mango technology and crop protection products safe application and evaluation of ground applications technology.

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SO THAT THE PUBLIC MAY KNOW

Truths on COMELEC's contract with Mega Pacific Consortium for the Automated Vote Counting Machines

BRIEF HISTORY AND COMPARISON OF COMELEC'S ACM PURCHASES :

Year	1996 - 1998	2004	2004	Government Savings from contract with Mega Pacific Php 2.28 Billion
Suppliers of ACM	AIS / ES&S	TIM (Losing Bidder) with ES &S	Mega Pacific (Winning Bidder)	
Number of Machines Purchased	68	2,272 (Manual-Fed, Slow Counting Machines)	1,991 Automatic feeding Machines	
Coverage	ARMM Pilot -Test (Failed)	Mindanao & NCR only	Nationwide	
Number of Registered Voter	1,111,201	14,700,000	40,000,000	
Total Project Cost	US\$1,299,855	Php 1,297,860,560	Php 1,248,949,088	
Quantified to present 40Million voters	Php 2.573 Billion	Php 3.532 Billion	Php 1.248 Billion	

Mega Pacific's bid not only saved the government P2.28 Billion pesos their ACM was also technically superior as compared to the ACM TIM offered. Below is a head-to-head comparison of both machines:

WINNER	MEGA PACIFIC'S ACM	LOSER	TIM'S ACM
A.	COUNTS 50 BALLOTS PER MINUTE	A.	COUNTS 10 BALLOTS PER MINUTE
B.	READS BOTH SIDES OF THE BALLOT IN ONE PASS (DUPLEX READING)	B.	ONLY READS ONE SIDE OF THE BALLOT PER PASS
C.	DETECTS & WILL REJECT FAKE BALLOTS (USING SECURITY FEATURES LIKE MICR CODES)	C.	CANNOT DETECT FAKE BALLOTS AND WILL STILL COUNT EVEN PHOTOCOPIED BALLOTS
D.	DETECTS & WILL REJECT PREVIOUSLY READ BALLOTS	D.	CANNOT DETECT & WILL STILL COUNT PREVIOUSLY READ BALLOTS
E.	HAS DATA ENCRYPTION USING WORLD RENOWNED "VERISIGN" SECURITY TO PROTECT THE DATA	E.	DOES NOT PROVIDE DATA ENCRYPTION
F.	HAS A PENTIUM 4 PROCESSOR	F.	HAS AN ANTIQUE/OBSOLETE 286 MEGAHERTZ PROCESSOR (BELOW THE 400 MHZ REQUIRED BY THE COMELEC RFP)
G.	HAS A CD WRITER DRIVE	G.	DOESN'T PROVIDE A DISKETTE OR A CD WRITER DRIVE, IT ONLY HAS A PCMCIA SLOT
H.	SEMI-AUTOMATIC FEEDER	H.	MANUAL FEEDING BY HAND
I.	HAS A REJECT BIN FOR REJECTED BALLOTS	I.	DOES NOT HAVE A REJECT BIN
J.	ONLY NEEDS ONE OPERATOR TO OPERATE THE ACM	J.	NEEDS TO 2-3 PERSONS TO OPERATE THE ACM

AS MANDATED BY RA 8436 THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TESTED AND CERTIFIED THAT MEGA PACIFIC'S 1,991 AUTOMATED COUNTING MACHINES DELIVERED TO COMELEC ARE 100% ACCURATE FOR NORMAL, HARSH AND COLD CONDITIONS.

THE KOREAN NATIONAL ELECTION COMMISSION (NEC) OF SOUTH KOREA CERTIFIES THAT SK C&C, (MANUFACTURER & SUPPLIER OF MEGA PACIFIC AUTOMATED COUNTING MACHINE) PROVIDED THE COUNTING MACHINES TO TWO NATIONAL ELECTIONS IN 2002, THE LOCAL ELECTION AND THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WITH MORE THAN 20 MILLION VOTERS EACH.

Dear Commissioner Dorra:

(EXCERPT)

In connection with your query this morning, we would like to clarify the DOST Report dated 01-03 April 2003 pertaining to the testing and technical evaluation of the automated counting machine (ACM) submitted by the MEGA PACIFIC SOLUTIONS, INC., specifically, on Item No.1 of the Key Requirements e.g. accuracy rating of 99.995%.

Certainly, the verification test would show that the machine is 100% accurate in reading and counting the votes that are properly shaded, provided that the ballots are fed with the right orientation. Hence, we can safely conclude that the machine has a 100% accuracy rating on all environmental conditions.

Nevertheless, the security feature of the existing test software presently installed in the machine already addresses this concern which rejects the ballots if fed improperly (inverted) and allows the machine operator to re-feed the ballots (not more than three times) in accordance with the guidelines of COMELEC. Moreover, except for 1 ACM (with an accuracy rating of 99.998%), all the 456 machines (including the retested 9 units) that were tested by the DOST (as of October 20, 2003) have an accuracy rating of 100%.

After experiencing the present performance of the ACM, the DOST has no doubt whatsoever, that the ACM can be 100% accurate in reading and counting the votes if each voter will do their part in accomplishing the ballots properly.

Thank you very much and we hope you will find everything in order.

Very truly yours,

ROLANDO T. VILORIA, CESO III
Executive Director cum
Chairman, DOST - Technical Evaluation Committee

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY
IRENE H. TIJAM
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
DATE: 10/25/03

Letter Of Independent Information Technology Practitioners Assisting COMELEC

Re : RESPONSE TO THE SUPREME COURT DECISION
IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY FOUNDATION OF THE
PHILIPPINES (ITFP) v. COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS (COMELEC)

Mr. Chairman

(EXCERPT)

All assurances that the software will be ready and will perform as it should is a concerted effort of all the above groups of technical professionals. We cannot agree with the Decision's message that the Court must void the contract because the ACM software might not work. On the contrary, we can affirm that the COMELEC took cognizance of all possible risks, and had gathered all possible qualified resources to ascertain that the ACM software would have performed as required on Election Day.

Very truly yours,

HELENA J. CELIS
Technical Advisor, Phase II Automated
Counting and Counting Project
Chairman, TAIRC PIA-8192

JIA ELENA P. YAH TOORIE
Technical Advisor, Phase II Automated
Counting and Counting Project
President, Philippine Computer Society

RODOLFO RONTESCAPO
Technical Advisor, Phase II Automated
Counting and Counting Project
Former VP, Information Systems,
Planning and Control,
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JOSEPH DORRA
Technical Advisor, Phase II Automated
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Asst. Professor, College of Computer
Studies, De La Salle University

ALFONSO T. TAYAN
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President, PCHLWOTR, Inc.

CARLOS MANUEL
Technical Advisor, Phase II Automated
Counting and Counting Project
Vice President, Philippine Computer
Society
Vice President, Information Systems
Security Society of the Philippines

NA. ELOHORA PARERO
Technical Advisor, Phase II Automated
Counting and Counting Project
CEO, GDSpeed Online Solutions

ALFONSO TAYAN, JR.
Technical Advisor, Phase II Automated
Counting and Counting Project
Director, Information Systems Security
Society of the Philippines

Although the Supreme Court majority decision voided the contract between COMELEC and MEGA PACIFIC, doesn't it deserve a review and reconsideration? In compliance with R.A. 8436, the COMELEC bidded out and awarded the contract to the lowest responsive bidder and saved 2.3 billion pesos for the government. There were 50 bidders but none protested the award and accepted that Mega Pacific deserved the award. If "eligibility" of the awardee as a bidder is an issue, it was rendered moot and academic when Mega Pacific competently and fully delivered the counting machines ordered by COMELEC which accepted and paid for them after the Dept. of Science and Technology had tested and certified them to be 100% accurate. It was said that the best opinions are sometimes dissenting opinions. These may be seen in the "separate opinions" of Chief Justice Hilario G. Davide Jr., Associate Justices Hilario C. Vitug and Dante Tinga on this matter.

Justice Vitug said that the Supreme Court is not a trier of facts and should not take cognizance of the case. The enormity of the factual disputes would have required an extensive inquiry into the facts, which being unsettled, would not allow an intrusion by the Court. The Court neither controls nor supervises the exercise of authority and discharge of function by another government office. If it were otherwise, the act of governance and the responsibility that thereto attaches are then effectively shifted from where they belong over to where they should not be. The Court is bound merely to construe and to apply the law, regardless of its wisdom and salutariness, and to strike it down only when constitutional prescriptions are disregarded. It is what the fundamental law mandates, and it is what the Court must do. The High Court's duty is to decide questions of law, not questions of fact.

Chief Justice Davide joined Justice Vitug in his strong recommendation that the case be dismissed. He further said the Supreme Court did not issue a Temporary Restraining Order. In the meantime then the parties were not barred from performing their respective obligations under the contract. The COMELEC has already paid a large portion of its contracted obligation and the private respondent has delivered the contracted equipment for automation. Setting aside the contract in question at this late hour may have unsettling, disturbing and even destabilizing effect. For another, the law on Automated Election System (R.A. 8436) and Exec. Order 172 and 175 which allocated the funds for the implementation in the May 2004 elections would be put to naught. Finally, there is no suggestion that graft and corruption attended the bidding process, or that the contract price is excessive or unreasonable. All that the petitioners claim is that "the bidding and the award process was fatally flawed. The public respondents acted without or in excess of jurisdiction when it awarded the project." It may be precipitate for this Court to declare void the contract in question.

Justice Tinga said that nowhere in the long majority decision was it shown that the COMELEC had defied the Constitution, any law or jurisprudence. He added that due regard to the independent (not to say constitutional) character of the Commission requires that the power of the Supreme Court to review the acts of that body should be used sparingly.

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Across the NATION

Assistant Editor Tony Bergonia

Soldiers rescue daughter of sergeant from bandits

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Soldiers yesterday rescued the 7-year-old daughter of a Marine sergeant abducted by suspected Abu Sayyaf gunmen in Jolo on Feb. 19, the military said.

Brig. Gen. Alexander Yapching, commander of the Army's 104th Infantry Brigade, told the INQUIRER that Rachel Anne Gojit was rescued in Barangay Jinggan in Panglima Estino town.

Gojit was on her way to the Notre Dame Elementary School in downtown Jolo when armed men forcibly took her.

The driver of the modified bicycle she was riding in was killed when he tried to prevent the suspects from taking the girl away.

Yapching said for more than two weeks, soldiers combed the island-province starting from Talipao town.

He said the military finally caught up with the suspected bandits in Panglima Estino around 1 a.m. yesterday. No clash was reported.

"The kidnappers sensed the heavy movement of our troops from Talipao so they went to Luuk then proceeded to Panglima Estino," Yapching said.

He said the military employed "persuasion flights using two OV-10 Broncho planes and two MG-520 helicopters."

Yapching identified the leader of the kidnappers as Alkimer Askadi.

"And our troops are now pursuing them. We believe they are members of the Abu

Sayyaf Group," he said.

Brig. Gen. Nelson Allaga, chief of the 3rd Marine Brigade based in Sulu, said Askadi demanded P2 million in ransom from M/Sgt. Eddie Gojit, the victim's father.

"However, the family did not give a single centavo because they suspect that the kidnapping of the girl has some connection with a family feud," Allaga said.

He said one of the girl's aunts was arrested and detained after the military confirmed her links to the abduction.

Yapching said aside from mosquito bites and "some skin rashes" the victim is in good condition.

"She lost weight but she's healthy," he said. *Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Slain mayor's rival plans to sue gov for libel

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The political rival of slain Mayor Roy Jumao-as of Hindang town in Leyte is planning to sue for libel Leyte Gov. Remedios Petilla and Insp. Benito Cristino, Hindang police chief, for allegedly dragging his name into the killing.

Elpidio Cabal Jr., village chief of Hindang's Barangay Dos, said he was already consulting his lawyers because the statements of Petilla and Cristino affected him and his family.

He said Petilla was quoted as saying that the killing of Jumao-as and his son Jake was politi-

cally motivated and that the mayoralty race in Hindang was hotly contested. Her statement, he added, was published in the INQUIRER and Cebu Daily News on March 5.

Cabal said he also heard Cristino's interview over a radio station in Cebu City where the police official described the killing as politically motivated and tagged him as the possible suspect.

Petilla, an ally of the slain mayor, denied she implicated Cabal in the killing.

She said she only cited politics as among the possible angles in the killing when she was interviewed by two Cebu-based radio stations and by the National Bureau of Investiga-

tion (NBI)-Central Visayas.

"I was misquoted. What I actually said was there could be many reasons why Mayor Jumao-as was killed," she told the INQUIRER.

"I never said that he (Cabal) was responsible for the death of Jumao-as," she added.

The INQUIRER tried to contact Cristino but he could not be reached by phone.

Cabal was challenging the reelection bid of Jumao-as.

The mayor and his son Jake were shot and killed on March 4 in front of their apartment on Jakosalem Street in Cebu City. *With a report from Joey A. Gabieta, PDI Visayas Bureau*

STUDENTS of the Central School in La Trinidad, Benguet, view one of the Benguet Museum's features: one of two mummies in different positions.

EV SPIRITUP/POI PHOTO

Benguet Museum awaits claimants of mummies

By Desiree Caluza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—Two mummies kept in a museum here are awaiting their rightful claimants.

But the features of these two centuries-old mummies, which were recovered in Baguio City in 1999, are starkly different. One is in a crouching (or fetal) position, a distinct feature of mummies found in Kabayan town, while the other is in a lying position. Both are kept inside a glass case in the museum.

Bryan Camhit, curator of the Benguet Museum, said elders in Kabayan town were hesitant to claim the upright mummy because the town was not known to mummify their dead in that position.

Camhit also said the elders were verifying the actual origin of the crouching mummy, a male, before they could claim it and return it to its burial cave in the town.

He said apart from Kabayan, other Benguet towns like Buguias, Kapangan, Kibungan and Bakun had documented accounts of mummification. Some officials and villagers in Mt. Province were also claiming that their ancestors had practiced mummification.

Camhit said no one could determine where the upright mummy, a woman, came from. That mummy stands at 1.68 meters.

Camhit declined to elaborate how the mummies were stolen from their burial caves and recovered in Baguio City in 1999, saying the information is "confidential."

He said museum personnel occasionally take out the mummies and expose them to sunlight as part of the preservation process.

He said the crouching mummy has elaborate tattoos, which could help identify its origin.

Last month, eight stolen Kabayan mummies recovered between the 1970s and 2003 were reburied in Timbac Cave in Barangay Pacso, Kabayan. The community butchered animals to appease the spirits of their ancestors during the reburial.

Camhit said it is possible that other tribes in the Cordillera will claim that they practice mummification since traditionally the ritual of preserving the dead is the same.

He said the preservation of the dead starts the moment it is placed in a death chair, called sangadil, and smoked for a few days.

But anthropologist Isikias Picpican, author of "The Igorot Mummies," said putting the dead in a sangadil and smoking the body are not the actual mummification but only one of its processes.

Kenneth Elcho, a Kabayan resident, said other Cordillera tribes that claim that they practice mummification should present proof that their ancestors had practiced it.

He said Kabayan villagers had documented the process through the documentation of actual accounts of mummification by oral tradition and literature.

"We even have a local name for it, we call it mek'ing," Elcho said.

"We do not really try to track down the mummies that were stolen because somehow, they would always find their way back. Maybe it is also because those who had stolen them felt the curse of the mummies," Elcho said.

The Benguet Museum has been campaigning for the return of the mummies. Posters featuring the photographs of some missing mummies are displayed on the museum's walls.

workers have received only 5 percent increases in salaries, despite the escalation in the prices of basic commodities.

A health worker, she added, only gets about P15,000 a month while a nurse only receives a monthly pay of P6,000 to P7,000.

What they were asking for, Efren said, was an increase similar to that granted to judges.

"Other workers in government like the judges and the military have already received pay hikes, I think it is high time the needs of health workers are also addressed," she said.

Last month, health workers in Negros Oriental spearheaded a signature campaign to ask the government to stop the exodus of doctors and nurses to prevent a collapse of the country's health system.

In the position paper, the health workers sought a 100-percent increase in salaries to encourage government doctors and nurses to stay in the Philippines and improve the delivery of health services.

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Cops kill car theft suspects in Laguna

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Two unidentified suspects believed to be members of a car theft syndicate were killed in a gunfight with police after they tried to evade a checkpoint of the Traffic Management Group (TMG) of the Calabarzon police in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, just past midnight yesterday.

TMG Calabarzon chief Supt. Artemio Bermido said his men were conducting a routine security check in the area at around 1 a.m. when four men on board two Kawasaki motorcycles without license plates passed through the checkpoint.

Bermido said the TMG personnel, led by Chief Insp. Rolando Lepazpi, flagged down the suspects but instead of stopping, the suspects sped off prompting the policemen to give chase.

The suspects fought it out when cornered near the Cabuyao-Sta. Rosa boundary.

Two of the still unidentified suspects died on the spot and the two others, also unidentified, fled on foot. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Gov't doctors, nurses seek pay hike

By Carla P. Gomez
PDI Visayas Bureau

BACOLOD CITY—Government doctors and nurses in Negros Occidental have joined their counterparts in Negros Oriental in asking President Macapagal-Arroyo for salary increases.

Dr. Luisa Efren, acting provincial health officer, said the medical practitioners would adopt the position paper of the doctors and nurses in Negros Oriental that they will submit to Malacañang.

The health workers are also asking for a 100-percent increase in salaries to stem the mass exodus of doctors and nurses to other countries.

"If government does not make salaries attractive for health workers, we will be faced with a shortage of doctors, many of whom are now taking up nursing courses so they can go abroad," Efren said.

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INQUIRER *Northern Luzon*

Editor Jun Bandyrel
Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

A unique chess haven

By Delmar Cariño
Baguio City

PLAYING scrabble is his favorite pastime, but this missionary builder has more chess sets at home than tiles inscribed with letters.

Huub Luyk, 51, takes pride in having probably the widest collection of chess sets that "reflect the history of the struggles of different people all over the world."

His home in Santo Rosario Village at Campo Sioco in Baguio City is more apt to be called a chess haven. A visit would make one easily notice the different kinds of chess sets and pieces that have become part of his home's interior design.

"I have 56 chess sets," Luyk said. "These sets are so precious that perhaps they can be the only legacy I can give my children."

Name the models of chess sets—staunton, gothic, marble, plastic, wooden, metal, ivory, ceramics, acrylic and bronze—and Luyk has them all.

And with 56 chess sets, Luyk, a Dutch born in Sassenheim, The Netherlands, actually has in his house 1,792 chess pieces.

Also included is a set whose pieces are all matchboxes but whose lids are designed with chess pieces.

The biggest, which resembles a tournament-size set, is permanently displayed at the sala and can be readily played anytime. Luyk uses the set to teach wife Becky the rudiments of the game.

On the side of the white pieces is written the name Harold Rex, 1066, while on the black side appears the name William Dux, 1087. Luyk said the names referred to two of The Netherlands' greatest warriors in medieval history.

Luyk married Becky, a Filipina, on Aug. 30, 1976, a few years after he first came to the country as a member of the Organization for Netherlands Volunteers, an equivalent of the US Peace Corps. They have three children.

The Rex-Dux set is actually Luyk's first collection. It was given in 1981 by close friend Peter Pinder, an Englishman who, like Luyk, has made the summer capital his second home.

Luyk said Pinder gave him the set for letting Pinder use his car for a year. Pinder last



LUYK among his treasured chess sets.

year created a chess set that featured the political figures of Edsa II.

Serious collector

Luyk said he got so fascinated with chess sets that he became a serious collector. His sets were taken from his travels abroad. Some were bought for him by friends as "pasalubong" whenever they come home from abroad.

The chess sets came from Russia, Africa, Amsterdam, Tanzania, India, South Africa, Indonesia, Nepal, England, The Netherlands, Romania, Mexico and Bangladesh. His chess set made of matchboxes came from Spain.

Luyk's chess pieces are carved differently. Aside from the regular chess pieces played today, some are carved as members of the royal family, as good and bad gods, or as warriors. Some are images of native heroes and heroines.

His favorite is a Dutch chess set whose pieces are made of nuts and bolts. "Beautiful," he said, referring to how the maker specially crafted the used metal parts into a set.

Luyk also has two sets handcrafted by Ifugao

woodcarvers. One is a set he bought in Barangay Asin in the 1980s. The set, Luyk said, was "unfinished and dirty, but I bargained for it."

Another is a rare set made of old padlocks he bought in Banaue, Ifugao. "These sets show the different kinds of people and the way they live," Luyk said.

Luyk also has a unique chess board which he personally made. It is a wooden set but the 64 squares on the board are of different elevations. "For art's sake," he said.

Luyk rubbed elbows with chess greats Anatoly Karpov and Viktor Korchnoi when the two met in a historic match for the World Chess Championship at the Baguio Convention Center in 1978. He then represented the Royal Dutch Chess Federation and he prepared a scrapbook that detailed the moves of the rivals in all of their 32 games.

Asked if he is a good chess player, he said: "I am good but not an expert. I play scrabble better."

Luyk also has a collection of 57 different smoke pipes. But that is another story.

Popularity polling, Cordillera style

By Frank Cimatu
Baguio City

EVEN before local politicians can start campaigning, they have already started their own polling to gauge their "winnability."

In fact, in Baguio City, an incumbent official castigated a local radio station for starting a walk-in poll that showed him behind his three rivals.

How could that be, he told the station manager, when in his own poll, conducted by a Metro Manila university reportedly for P500,000, he was clearly ahead. We could only say, of course.

But in the interior Cordillera, a different popularity poll is ongoing, and instead of dubious P500,000 worth of random sampling, they use pig bile.

In Mt. Province, for example, they have revived an age-old ritual of divination last used by warriors about to go on a headhunting ritual. The ritual, called the *pigi*, would assure the safety of the headhunting.

A ritual animal, usually a pig, is butchered and a *manisip-ok* (native diviner) would look at the innards. If the bile of the pig is hidden or ekebe, it meant that the mission would be successful and would give the warriors invincibility but, on some occasions, invisibility.

If the bile is well exposed, it's best not to go on or else, ill fortune will be met.

Ditto for modern-day politicians.

'Pigi' readings

According to a Philippine Information Agency report in Mt. Province, a well-known politician had an unfortunate reading during the *pigi* in the 2001 elections but decided to ignore it and went on with his re-election bid. He lost.

It is not known if the other politicians in the province have heeded their *pigi* readings be-

cause so far, no one has withdrawn his or her candidacy.

There are other factors for a person to withdraw in Cordillera politics, anthropologist Isikias Picpican said, but traditional rituals still hold sway.

"The blessing of leaders is always considered when running for a certain position. A candidate favorably endorsed by prominent elders in the community has relatively greater chances than others," he said.

But that is probably because they have innards to divine the political chances.

"Traditional rituals are often performed by political bets to gain the favor of the unseen during the election process. Some would perform rituals to find out if their chances for winning are favorable before they even file their candidacy. Otherwise, they seek other positions," said Picpican, curator of the Saint Louis University Museum.

"Rituals can also be performed to silence a rival candidate for a position or to influence even the votes of detractors during election," he added.

Picpican cited a candidate who used a chicken instead of a pig and still got a favorable reading. He filed his candidacy and indeed won.

Another mischievous politician performed a ritual to silence his opponent.

"In every political rally, the rival candidate could not utter coherently and could not deliver or expound on his platform of governance," Picpican said.

Fest shows best of Abra

By Artha Kira Paredes
Bangued, Abra

THE CELEBRATION of this year's "Arya Abra" Festival in Bangued, Abra, focused on the best products that the agricultural province could offer.

The festival, which opened last week and ends today, also featured the trade fair "Padaya 2004," in which 14 towns showcased their unique handcrafted products, furniture, bamboo crafts, loom weaving products and processed tropical fruits.

Marites Damian, assistant regional director of the Department of Trade and Industry and concurrent DTI-Abra director, said the trade priority in the province was the promotion of bamboo products.

Another focus is on the local furniture industry, which, she says, attracts buyers during trade fairs.

Damian said the department wanted to develop individual industries in the province until these could stand on their own.

She said the trade fair had helped many manufacturers to become more innovative and "to mix other raw materials with their products."

Last year, the official said, sales from the Padaya reached P1.565 million and booked orders totaled P1.736 million.

An agri-aqua fest, one of the features of the festival, presented fresh, preserved and cooked products that were unique in

Abra's towns.

Agriculturist Jesus Villamor Jr. said the Arya Abra was not only a form of thanksgiving but an opportunity for visitors to see how far the province had gone in its agriculture programs.

Exotic food

Exotic food products, such as wild boar and dried deer meat or *tapa* from Tingel and Malibong towns, were also sold.

The absence of *ludong*, Abra's most delicious and most expensive fish (about P1,800 a kilogram), however, was noticeable this year. Traders from Tingel, where *ludong* is usually caught, said the cold temperature had discouraged fishermen from catching fish in time for the festival.

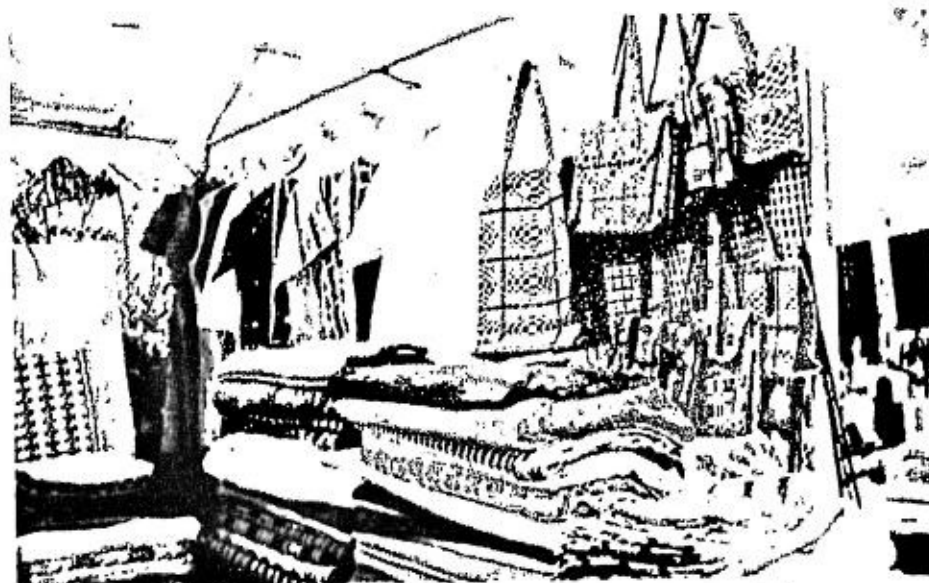
The traditional red rice or *ballatinaw*, "the king of rice and the rice for kings," was also sold.

Lagangilang town showed off its loofa (dried fibrous *patola*), which is used as a body scrub. Farmers in the town said they were starting to get orders for export of loofa.

Langiden town featured its sweets, such as candies made from watermelon peelings, tomato, squash and sweet potato.

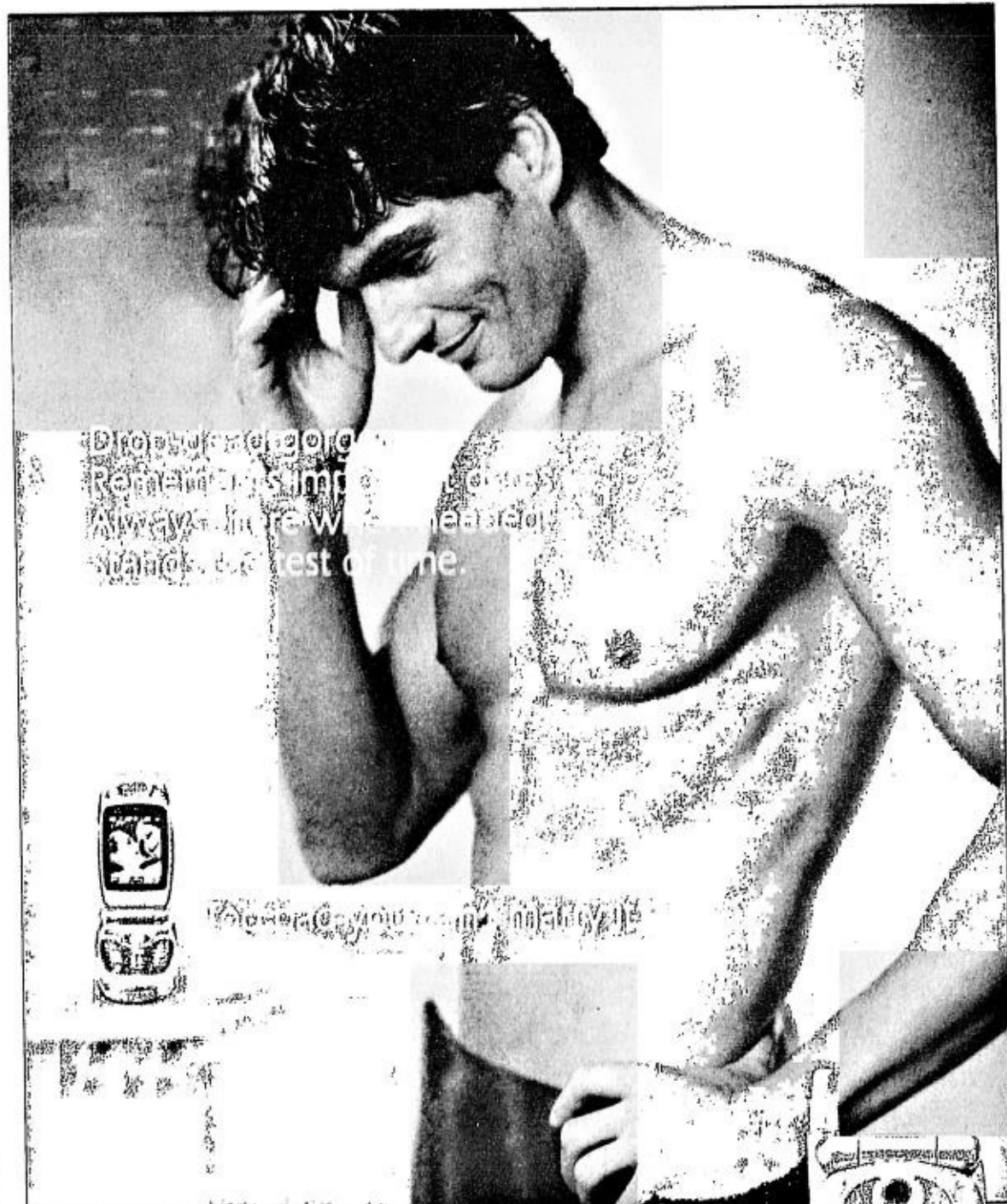
Cris Adriatico, provincial agriculturist, said the old industry of sugarcane growing was also being revived. Products derived from sugarcane, like *basi* (wine) and vinegar, were being promoted.

The festival culminated with the Tingguian Festival, a feature of the Tingguian culture, tradition and practices, on Tuesday.



LOOM weavers from Bulbulala in La Paz, Abra, merge traditional and modern designs.

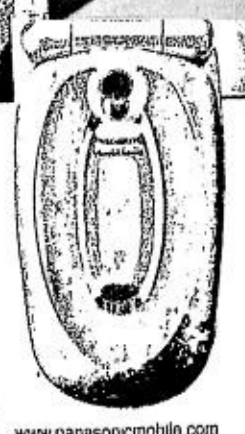
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FPJ bares long-awaited platform

ACTOR Fernando Poe Jr. unveiled yesterday his long-awaited platform, promising to restore trust in government, fight poverty and reorient the policy on globalization.

"There is only one thing I can promise you if I am fortunate enough—I will be a true servant of the people," the opposition presidential candidate said at the launching of a booklet containing his six-point program.

Poe said he would work to "restore trust and confidence in our government" and change the country's "culture of corruption" and "destructive politics."

"What we need is a leadership that will truly implement the law, a leadership that will give comfort instead of fear," he told about 500 supporters cheering him by calling out his nickname "FPJ."

The 64-year-old high school dropout and political neophyte had been under pressure to disclose his platform since he announced his candidacy in December. His presidential bid has

unsettled financial markets and business people, who fear a repeat of the failed presidency of Poe's friend and fellow actor, Joseph Estrada.

Vulnerable sectors

Appealing to the poor—Poe's main electoral base—the 24-page booklet promises to provide Filipinos with "minimum basic needs," ensure that the government "lives within its means" and protect the "most vulnerable sectors."

It also promises land reform, 20 percent of the national budget for rural infrastructure, credits for small farmers and fishermen from foreign aid, and a nationwide employment program.

The document pledged to "reorient the government's policy on globalization to focus on pushing for expanded markets for our products and protecting vulnerable sectors from unfair competition."

This would include ensuring "the implementation and alloca-

tion of resources for safety nets in agriculture and industries affected by globalization," as well as the forging of bilateral trade arrangements with different countries.

Restructure debt

It also said his administration would "look into the possibility" of restructuring the government's foreign and domestic debt.

To control the budget deficit, Poe said he would order "drastic cost-cutting measures" and would "look into the possible imposition of a balanced budget rule or a budget deficit ceiling to ensure that government does not overspend."

Income tax collection would be improved partly by abolishing the internal revenue service and replacing it with a private revenue agency.

He also promised a "depoliticized environment" for the energy sector to encourage more investments in power and transmission plants, while vowing to "strengthen the regulatory mechanisms to

protect the consumers."

To ensure transparency, citizens' groups would be authorized to monitor public bids for government projects.

Parliamentary form

Poe wants to encourage foreign investment by promising to minimize judicial intervention in major projects. He vowed to review constitutional provisions on foreign equity participation, a reference to the 40-percent limit on foreign capital in public utilities and the ban on foreigners owning land.

A Poe administration also would "review the possibility" of amending the Constitution to switch to a parliamentary government under a federal system, a plan also supported by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The platform also would "invigorate" the country's role in the global fight against terrorism, while implementing a "national peace policy" of dialogue and negotiations with rebel groups. **Reports from AP and AFP**

US relents, allows sister of ailing vet to go to US

From page A1

news on Monday, his wife Alicia told Agence France Presse.

"He (Philip) couldn't even eat his breakfast, he was so excited," she said from their modest brick home in Chalmette, Louisiana.

The US Department of Homeland Security granted Philip Bongawil's sister, Carmelita Fuchigami, humanitarian parole, a special visa commonly used in medical emergencies.

Fuchigami, 46, lives in Baguio City. Consular officials in Seoul and Manila had twice rejected her application for a nonimmigrant visa, saying she had provided insufficient proof of her intention to return to the Philippines.

The Bongawils attributed the initial refusal by consular officials to jitters after the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States in 2001.

Blood, tissue match

Against the odds, Fuchigami's blood and tissue type turned out to be a near-perfect match for Bongawil who, according to his doctors, badly needed stem cell transplant.

Since Fuchigami's visa application was first turned down, Bongawil's condition has progressed to full-blown blood cancer. Doctors said Bongawil could die in weeks without a transplant.

According to the Bongawils' attorney, Lawrence Fabacher, Fuchigami could be in the United States in weeks.

"We hope to see her here soon," Fabacher said. "Immigration and customs enforcement in Washington has approved the petition. She just needs the consulate in the Philippines to issue the travel documents. It's just a question of how long it takes. They (consular officials) denied the visa, so they may be a bit resentful and make her jump through some hoops."

Alicia Bongawil credited media attention, along with the assistance of Fabacher and US Sen. John Breaux, with "putting the heat" on the Department of Homeland Security.

"It really renews your faith in everything—the US, God, everything," she said. "It is just a shame we had to fight so hard."

Devastated

In an interview last week, Bongawil said he was devastated upon learning that his sister had been denied permission to come to the United States for the procedure.

"When (Carmelita) first called, he (Philip) just sat down, totally heartbroken and depressed. You have hope so close but so far away," Alicia added.

Fuchigami first applied for a nonimmigrant visa at the US Consulate in Seoul, South Korea, where she was working temporarily. Her application was rejected.

In January, Fuchigami returned to the Philippines and reapplied for a US visa. She was again considered a presumed immigrant.

The Bongawils said they could not understand why US authorities would suspect that Fuchigami, who has a husband and four children in the Philippines, was seeking to settle in the United States.

Bongawil said his sister had provided ample documentation of his illness to consular officials, including letters and laboratory results from his doctors, and a letter of support from Senator Breaux.

Bongawil's most recent visit to MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas, confirmed that he had full-blown leukemia.

A matter of weeks

"He will very likely die of his leukemia... It could be a matter of weeks," said Dr. Richard Champlin, who is directing Bongawil's care. "We need to do the transplant before his leukemia can get out of control. Every day that passes, his chances get worse."

Champlin said Bongawil's chances of recovery had declined from 50 percent to about 20 percent. "It is frustrating to have a treatment available but not be able to go forward because of whatever political or administrative obstacles are preventing his sister from getting into the country," he said.

Fabacher, whom the Bongawils had hired to help them with immigration rules, then asked US officials two weeks ago to grant Fuchigami humanitarian parole, a type of visa commonly used in medical emergencies. It allows a foreigner's body into the United States but grants him/her no legal rights.

"This case is extraordinarily well documented," he said. "But (US officials) don't believe any of this. Even if they believe Philip is ill, they think this is also a scam to get Carmelita into the US."

The Citizenship and Immigration Services reviewed Fabacher's request, and the Department of Homeland Security gave the go-ahead for Fuchigami to come to the United States.

Background

Bongawil came to the United States as a young man and joined the Navy during the Vietnam War, a time when the US military was recruiting directly among Filipino citizens. He became a US citizen in 1976, and spent the next two decades as a career naval officer.

Bongawil said last week he had no hard feelings against his adopted country and supported its post-Sept. 11 immigration crackdown which, according to him, was partly responsible for his difficulties.

But he said US consular officials should have taken a little time to review his case. "My sister's interview in Korea didn't even last three minutes. Nobody even called the doctors. Why don't they just handcuff my sister, bring her here and bring her back?" **AFP**



CONVENORS of the presidential business agenda for the elected president's first 100 days in office discuss the matter with FPJ shown here with (from left seated) former Finance Secretary Jose Pardo, Washington Sycip and Manny Pangilinan. In back are Sammy Lim, Serge Luis Ortiz, George Barcelon, Miguel Varela and Donald Dee.

FPJ, businessmen discuss 100-day agenda

From page A1

rights of labor—especially tilting toward that direction—as against the rights of management and business."

"He would like to arrive at industrial peace via consultations and open lines between and among labor and management," Poe's spokesperson said.

Escudero said Poe had also expressed reservations on the groups' recommendation for the legalization of jueteng because "this is a matter that Congress should at first sight rule upon."

Escudero said that Poe, as president, would "simply implement what the law says, and if the law says its illegal, he would enforce the letter of the law." Estimates of jueteng collection range from P10 billion to P35 billion annually.

Delicate

Miguel Varela, president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said Poe had reservations on the proposal to cut the pork barrel of lawmakers because the actor thought the issue was a "delicate" one.

Pork barrel, a source of kickbacks, is money taken from the national budget to fund projects that legislators identify. Each congressman is allotted P65 million a year and each senator P200 million.

Sycip said Poe was very "receptive to the suggestions" of the group and thought it to be a "very good effort."

"I think he appeared to be very sincere in



WITH SUSAN by his side, FPJ unveils his platform of governance, which aims to restore confidence in government, at the UP's Bahay Alumni on Tuesday.

what he discussed with us," Sycip said.

Knew basic points

Sycip noted that Poe knew the "basic points" and discussed, for instance, "the possibility of developing tourism and how the benefits will be spread throughout the nation."

"He appears to be very sincere and knows some of the basic problems," Sycip told reporters.

Asked whether Poe would make a good president, Pangilinan said that "everybody should be given the chance."

Sergio Ortiz-Luis, president of the Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc., said Poe was a "good listener." He "studied our proposals, that's why he was very conversant," the businessman said.

GMA has exceeded TV ad limit—Angara

THE OPPOSITION yesterday claimed that President Macapagal-Arroyo had exceeded the 120 minutes of air time allotted to candidates by the Commission on Elections, having allegedly used up 178 minutes in television campaign advertisements.

Opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara denounced the Comelec for allegedly bending the rules on air time allotted to TV and radio ads of the candidates.

According to Angara, the Comelec had extended campaign air time from 120 to 180 minutes.

The grant of time allotments has also been expanded, from per candidate to per TV and radio station that the candidate will be appearing on.

Angara said that as of last night, the President had already used up 178 minutes in television ads alone.

"She's technically in default and should be disqualified," Angara said in a phone interview.

The senator said the poll body passed the new rules late Monday night when the election campaign was already in mid-stream.

The move "clearly favors the administration which has more resources and puts into disadvantage the opposition and minority," he said.

But Senate President Franklin Drilon disagreed with Angara.

Drilon noted that the law also says that aside from candidates, political parties are also allotted 120 minutes of air time.

Therefore, the President could use up the air time allotted to her political party and the two other parties under the administration coalition, Drilon said.

The President belongs to the Lakas-Christian Muslims Democrats which is in a coalition with the Liberal Party and the People's Reform Party in this election.

"We have a coalition candidate, so she can use the air time of these parties," Drilon said.

Christine Avendaño

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Ping says he wears red because he's mad at Palace

From page A1

suit nor barong but his signature red and yellow checkered shirt and denim pants. The Cebu businessmen didn't seem to mind.

Angry with Laban

"I'm (also) angry at the administration for having persecuted me for the past three years," the presidential candidate added, referring to the revival of the Kuratong Baleleng case and the attribution of other crimes to him by the government.

He is also angry with Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino president Sen. Edgardo Angara who, Lacson said, junked his candidacy without a proper party selection process, in favor of movie actor Fernando Poe Jr. "Checkered shirts represent hard

work. Red represents my anger for being persecuted for the past three years, not only by the administration but also by Angara," Lacson told Cebu businessmen.

The yellow trim on his red checkered shirts signifies good luck. Yellow is the color of gold which represents luck and prosperity. "Yellow is good feng shui," he said.

Filipino-Chinese support

Lacson enjoys the support of the Filipino-Chinese community many of whom he helped when he was still a police officer. The community credits him for the rescue of kidnap-for-ransom victims, many of whom are Chinese businessmen or their loved ones.

Lacson told the predominantly Filipino-Chinese members of the CCCI,

that unless the government gets its act together and fight graft and corruption, the peso's exchange rate may dip to P120 to \$1 by 2010.

Grim scenario

Lacson gave this grim scenario when he presented his platform of government to the chamber in Cebu City on Monday night.

"If the rate of peso devaluation continues, by 2010 the peso-dollar rate will hit P120 to \$1. If our country does not show signs of improvement, or worse, declines even further, the Philippines will be at the bottom of regional rankings by 2010—alongside or even worse than Bangladesh," he said.

The peso fell to its lowest level last month at more than P56 to \$1.



THE TRADEMARK shirt he wears wherever Ping Lacson campaigns like at the Malvar Public Market in Batangas supposedly brings him good feng sui.

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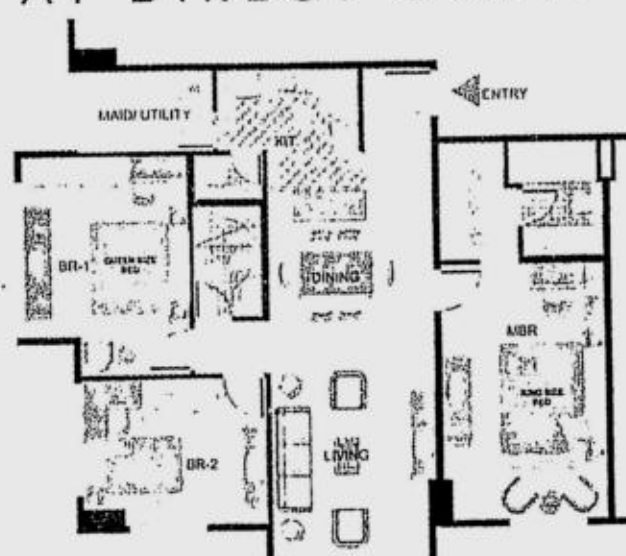
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Betti Sy slay case hits delay

By Tina Santos

THE QUEZON City Regional Trial Court has deferred the arraignment of the suspects in the kidnap-slay of Coca-Cola executive Betti Chua-Sy pending the resolution of the cases filed against some of the suspects before the Department of Justice (DOJ).

Judge Monina Zenarosa of the QC RTC Branch 76 granted the motion of the DOJ to suspend the arraignment.

The DOJ filed charges of kidnapping for ransom with homicide against suspects Edith Demol-Alaser and Baby Tamayo, alias Baby Maroto; Rodolfo Ortoza, Cerio Macanip Jr., Gerardo Anover, Ramil Victoriano and Mariolito Demol.

However, the DOJ sought to defer the proceedings since the charges against nine other suspects were still undergoing preliminary investigation.

Still with DOJ

The cases of Zosimo Lauzon, Ramil Artoza, Rube Artoza, Jessie Bacolbas, Alexander Albas, Oyay Anover, Leo Garido, Fernando Niegos and Cesar Amado are still pending before the DOJ.

Records showed that the accused abducted Sy, commercial finance director of Coca-Cola Export Corporation, while she was driving her Toyota RAV 4 along P. Dela Cruz, Sitio Gitna, Barangay Nagkaisang Nayon, Quezon City on Nov. 17, 2003.

The kidnapers shot Sy's car when she refused to open its door.

Suspect in killing of UP coed tagged by witness, charged

By Tarra Quismundo

THE CASE of a University of the Philippines student who was slain during a bus robbery in Manila has moved one step closer to justice.

Arrested suspect Ricardo Marzo, 33, a pedicab driver, has been charged with robbery with homicide before the Manila Regional Trial Court.

Robbery with homicide is a non-bailable offense.

Marzo was charged after he

was tagged by witness Mario Coquia, the conductor of the G-Liner bus where the robbery took place.

During the robbery, one of three suspects shot and killed 19-year-old pharmacy student Mary Joyce Lattao, who died of two bullet wounds in the head.

Lattao, a resident of Gardenville Subdivision, Sta. Mesa, was one of the passengers of the G-Liner bus that was robbed by three men around 8:30 a.m. on Feb. 15.

The suspects boarded the bus, with plate number TVM 620, as it traversed Claro M. Recto Avenue.

As the bus was passing through Ramon Magsaysay Avenue in Sta. Mesa, the robbers, armed with guns, announced a holdup and began taking the bags and cellular phones of passengers.

According to police investigation, Lattao resisted.

Irked, one of the suspects shot her.

Lattao was rushed to the Lourdes Hospital, where she died at

about 11:30 p.m.

Still unidentified and called "Ms. X" that time, Lattao was brought to Floresco Funeral Homes in Paco, Manila.

Her family found her in the morgue 10 days later.

Marzo was arrested in his house in Sampaloc, Manila, at dawn on Feb. 29, after Western Police District got leads from witnesses.

Another suspect was also arrested during the raid at his house but was released after wit-

nesses failed to identify him.

Marzo has denied any involvement in the crime, claiming that he was at home when the incident happened.

Now detained at the WPD Headquarters on United Nations Avenue in Manila, Marzo is set to enter his plea on the charges on March 24, before the sala of Manila RTC Branch 54 Judge Lucia Purugganan.

The police are appealing for leads on the two other suspects who remain at large.

GMA exempts buses from coding

Tradeoff for fare hike

By Gil Cabacungan and Margaux Ortiz

IN A MOVE to keep bus companies from joining the clamor for a fare hike, President Macapagal-Arroyo ordered the immediate exemption of public buses from the Unified Vehicular Volume Reduction Program or UVVRP.

The President told the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to temporarily suspend the coverage of the number coding scheme on public buses, particularly those on Edsa.

Bus operators had stated that they would not press for a P1.50 fare increase if the MMDA would lift the UVVRP that has limited the utilization of their fleet.

The operators of some 3,000 buses are blaming the coding scheme, which has cut the number of public buses on Edsa by 20 percent, for their smaller income. Ms Macapagal's suspension of

the UVVRP for public buses is on top of the government's move urging oil companies to sell fuel at discounted prices to public utility vehicles and prevent a fare increase.

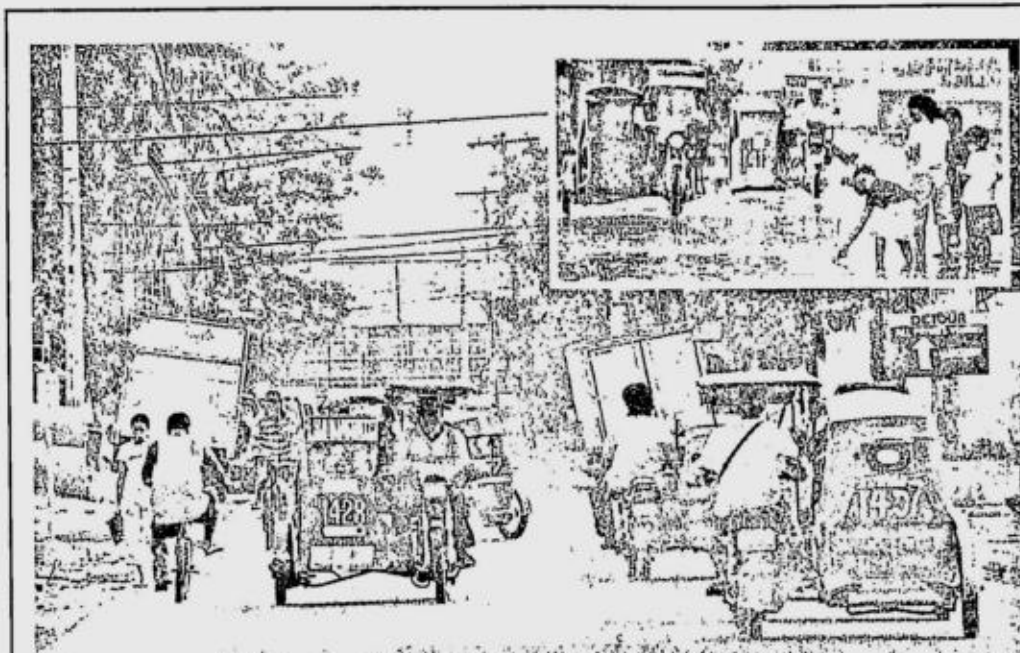
But MMDA Traffic Operations Center Director Angelito Vergel de Dios said the suspension of the UVVRP for buses could backfire on the operators.

He noted that studies had shown that with the UVVRP buses were only 60 percent full during rush hour.

Vergel de Dios said the load rate could further go down with more buses plying their routes.

Also, the additional buses could undermine the programs of the MMDA on Edsa and gravely affect the traffic situation.

Slower traffic would mean less trips for public utility vehicles, which could eventually affect the earnings of the bus drivers, conductors and operators.



DRY AGAIN

Tricycles and people again walk on dry land after the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority declogged Pasong Tirad Street in Makati City. The INQUIRER earlier called attention to a monthlong flooding along the road (inset).

EDWIN BACASMAS/ERIC ARAZAZ

Destileria Limtuaco sues Adboard over 'Kinse Anyos' ads

By Tina Santos

DESTILERIA Limtuaco, the maker of Napoleon brandy, yesterday stood firm on its claim that its "Kinse Anyos" commercial and billboards, which some sectors described as "offensive," had no sexual insinuations.

This developed as the company filed a P5-million lawsuit against the Advertising Board of the Philippines (AdBoard) and AdBoard executive director Oscar Valenzuela.

On March 3, the Adboard ordered the Sinson Lascano Group, which handles the brandy's advertising campaign, to pull out all the Napoleon Brandy Kinse

Anyos commercials and billboards following complaints that the campaign had a double meaning, one of which allegedly suggests men's preference for 15-year-old girls.

Destileria, through its lawyer Bonifacio Alentajan, is asking the Makati Regional Trial Court to order the revocation and/or cancellation of the certificate of registration, as well as the dissolution of the AdBoard.

Destileria Limtuaco also wants the AdBoard to pay a total of P5 million for actual, moral and exemplary damages and attorneys' fees.

Speaking at a press conference at a Quezon City hotel, the com-

pany's officials claimed that the radio commercials and big billboards of the brandy, carrying the tag-line "Nakatikim Ka Na Ba ng Kinse Anyos?" was by no means offensive to women.

The tagline refers to their Napoleon Brandy product, which they say had been stored in oak barrels for 15 years.

Destileria officials said the AdBoard had no power and no authority to compel them to remove the billboards or recall their clearance to air their commercials.

They added that the agency, as well as the groups who have been opposing the ads, only intended to trample on the company's right

to sell and advertise.

The brandy maker alleged that the AdBoard was usurping the functions of the Department of Trade and Industry, adding that the agency was claiming that it had the authority to govern and protect the advertising industry.

The advertisements of the brandy got the ire of women's partylist Gabriela, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, Movie Television Review and Classification Board and the Archdiocese of Manila.

Gabriela said it would picket the Destileria offices in Balintawak, Quezon City, today at 10:30 a.m. to protest the ads.

With Edson Tandoc Jr.



Checkpoint cops stumble on robbery suspects

By Edson Tandoc Jr. and Margaux Ortiz

FOUR suspected robbers, including two men who claim to be police agents, were arrested at a Caloocan City checkpoint the other night.

The police also seized from the suspects three handguns, stolen prepaid cell phone and Internet cards worth P300,000 and a grenade.

Remy Cruz, 32, Esperidion Flores, 36, Wilfredo Gantala, 38, and Francis Cejalvo, 39, were arrested at about 11 p.m. Monday at a checkpoint in Shelter Villa Subdivision, Barangay 175. The lawmen got suspicious when they saw that the suspects' vehicle, a maroon Tamaraw FX, had no license plates.

In a follow up investigation, the police learned that the suspects had held up a couple in Meycauyan, Bulacan hours earlier.

But the suspects denied the allegations. Flores told the INQUIRER that they were CIDG agents undertaking an undercover operation against a robbery gang.

Flores said that members of the robbery gang got suspicious and fled, leaving behind their loot of prepaid cards.

But according to the robbery victim, the arrested suspects were the same men who robbed her and her companion in Bulacan.

In Parañaque City, a member of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency was arrested yesterday for driving a heavily tinted car without license plates and possessing unlicensed firearms.

According to Supt. Ronald Estilles, city police chief, he and Southern Police District Director Chief Supt. Prospero Noble were on their way to Las Piñas when they saw the car of Senior Insp. Gilbert Buenafe, 33, on Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo Avenue at around 9 a.m.

Estilles said Buenafe's dark blue Honda Civic did not have the required plates and conduction sticker. The suspect even refused to slow down, but the police eventually blocked Buenafe's car near the Coastal Road toll gate.

Estilles said the suspect will be slapped with charges of illegal possession of firearms and violation of the omnibus election code.

JV urges respect for Erap's 'little privileges'

By Luige del Puerto

SAN JUAN Mayor Joseph Victor "JV" Ejercito said he wished his father, ousted President Joseph Estrada, would be let alone to enjoy the "little privileges" accorded him.

"If he has enjoyed little privileges like being allowed to walk to get some sun, why can't they let him be?" Ejercito, son of former President Joseph Estrada by actress Guia Gomez, said yesterday.

"The bottom line is that he is still under detention. He is not free," Ejercito said.

Criminal raps

Ejercito was reacting to reports that prosecutors and Plunder Watch, an anti-graft watchdog, have threatened to file criminal charges against government officials for allowing Estrada to get out of his detention cell in Camp Capinpin, a military camp, in Tanay, Rizal, and spend time in his resort just across the street.

Ejercito said Estrada's physician had strongly advised the former president to "get some sun."

"Remember that he spent three years inside Veterans (Memorial Medical Center) in Quezon City. He wasn't allowed to go out then, and his health has deteriorated as a result," the mayor said.

Jinggy party

Ejercito said he knows of only a few occasions when Estrada was allowed to leave the military facility. They included the time when Jinggy Estrada's birthday party was held at the villa.

Meanwhile, the opposition mayor described Plunder Watch

as "vindictive" and "selective."

"This group is very vindictive. When will they stop hitting us? When my whole family is wiped out, when we are all annihilated?" Ejercito said.

Ejercito said the group only seemed to come alive when the issue is against Estrada.

"Where were you during the Jose Pidal (expose) and the President Diosdado Macapagal Avenue (controversy)?" the mayor snapped.

Jose Pidal

Jose Pidal is allegedly the alias that First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo used to open bank accounts, where millions in campaign money was reportedly stashed. The Diosdado Macapagal Avenue, meanwhile, was a grossly overpriced road project.

Ejercito battled for his father's "privileges" even as the wardens of jails in Metro Manila reiterated that allowing detainees to walk out of their cells or outside of the detention centers was illegal.

In Marikina, prisoners may choose to go to the rooftop of the building where the city jail is located at least twice a week but never out of jail, according to Insp. Maricel Sese, chief administrative officer.

Official business

Detainees are not allowed to leave the detention center unless on official business, that is, they are being brought to the Fiscal's Office or they are being interrogated.

"We don't allow detainees to go basking under the sun," said Supt. Eduardo Lorenzo, San Juan's deputy chief of police.



San Juan fire leaves 32 families homeless

By Luige del Puerto

AT LEAST 32 families have been rendered homeless after a seven-hour fire hit a residential area in San Juan the other day.

No one was reported hurt or injured in the fire, the third major fire to hit Metro Manila since the start of March, dubbed the "Fire Prevention Month."

Damage to property was estimated at P5 million, according to SFO4 Chandler Arcadio.

Arcadio said firetrucks had a difficult time entering Leyva Street in Barangay Balong Bato because the road was narrow.

"Cars were also double-parked on the street," the fire investigator said.

The fire broke out at 4:32 p.m. It reached the fifth alarm ten minutes later.

Firefighters initially thought they had placed the fire under control by 7:35 p.m. But the fire rekindled and raged again. It was finally put out shortly before midnight.

The affected families have been evacuated to the barangay hall and to a basketball court.

Barangay officials have started distributing relief goods, mostly food, to the victims.

METROBRIEFS

Youth rob suspect

SEVENTEEN-YEAR-OLD Joel Laurestre of Bagbag, Novaliches, Quezon City, was shot dead in an alleged shootout with lawmen Monday night. Laurestre and two others had just reportedly robbed the passengers of a jeepney.

Tina Santos

Tiger mix-up

THE OWNER of the Tiger Investigation and Detective Agency and General Services yesterday said his firm continues to legally operate. Kahal Tiang issued a statement after the police earlier claimed that the security agency had "ceased to operate," following a raid at the house of a certain Chief Insp. Ruperto Regis, who yielded a large arms cache. Tiang explained that his agency was not associated with Regis, who was reportedly operating a different security agency.

Cepe, 76

ESTRELLA Dado Cepe, mother of Philippine Journalist Inc. librarian Josephine Gayona, died on Monday after a lingering illness. She was 76. Her body lies in state at the family residence in Phase 7, Block 136, Lot 43 Carissa Homes, Barrio Punta 1, Tanza, Cavite. Interment will be on March 14 after a 1 p.m. Mass at the Tanza municipal cemetery.

Oops, sorry

BINIBINGING Pilipinas first runner-up Tracy Javellona bagged the Ms Close-Up Smile and Bb. Avon Color titles. She also won in the Best in Long Gown competition in last Saturday's coronation night at Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City. The INQUIRER story had reported that Ma. Karla Bautista had won this award. Bb. Pilipinas second runner-up Princess Tiangson brought home the Ms Ponds title, while Candidate No. 3, Liwayway Baterna, was crowned Ms Friendship.

SUERTRES

SIX DIGIT (In exact order)

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METRO

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10 11 20 26 28 38

2 fire officials find selves in hot seat

Ombudsman orders their suspension for sacking whistle-blowers

By Armand N. Nocum

TWO TOP officials of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) were ordered suspended yesterday by the Office of the Ombudsman for sacking two employees who had bared their alleged illegal activities.

Suspended for six months were BFP chief Francisco S. Senot

and Metro Manila fire marshal Danilo R. Cabrera.

The two had earlier dismissed from the service Juliferd Hilay and Primo Arthur Cordeta VI, electrical inspector and stockman, respectively, of BFP.

Hilay and Cordeta allegedly incurred the ire of Senot and Cabrera, as well as other bureau officials, after they blew the whistle

on "alleged ghost deliveries of office supplies, equipment, repair of vehicles, etc."

"Aside from that, complainant Hilay even claimed personal knowledge of delivery of the proceeds of the alleged cash advances made by Chief Inspector Nelson Feliciano from 'friendly suppliers' to Florante M. Cruz, chief, finance service unit of the

Bureau of Fire Protection," said Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo in the suspension order he signed yesterday.

Marcelo said the continued stay of the two officials in office may "prejudice" the graft cases and several others that remain pending at the Ombudsman.

"Their continued stay in office pending determination of the

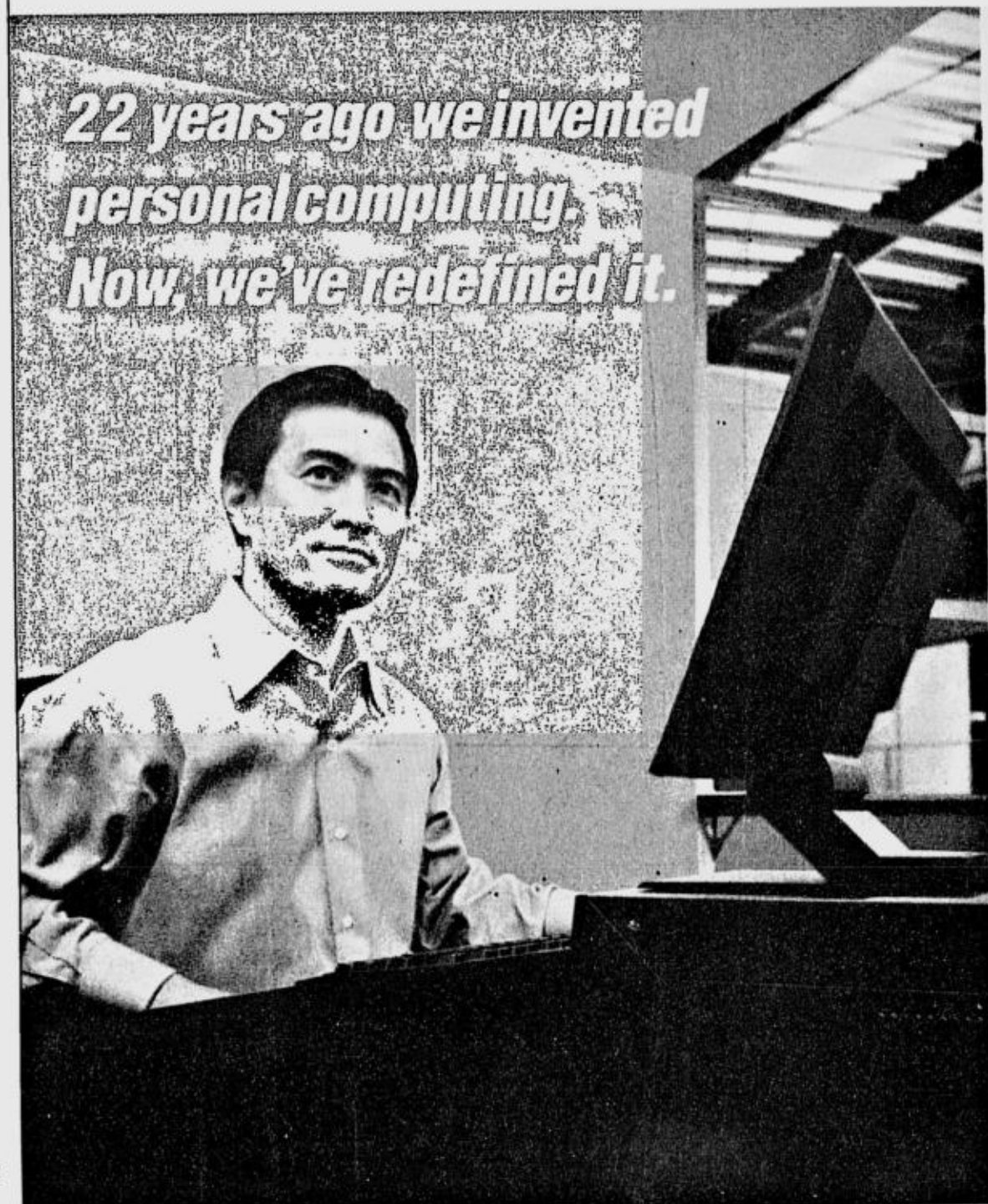
cases filed against them would deter other possible employees who intend to come out in the open and testify," Marcelo said.

He said Hilay and Cordeta, who are now considered as "material witnesses" in the graft case, were fired without due process.

They were never notified about their dismissal, nor a hearing been conducted on the mat-

ter, Marcelo added.

In a statement prepared by the Office of the Ombudsman spokesperson Ernesto Nocos, the preventive suspension slapped on Senot and Cabrera is intended to encourage other BFP employees to come out and testify relative to charges of alleged false deliveries of equipment made by their superiors at the BFP.



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Student not in a coma, says Mapua

By Leila B. Salaverria

OFFICIALS of the Mapua Institute of Technology yesterday denied one of its engineering students was in a coma after undergoing fraternity hazing rites last week.

Dr. Antonio Mateo Jr., vice president for student affairs of Mapua, said in a statement that the student, Benjo Quinit, was found sitting up and taking a meal when school officials visited him at the United Doctors Medical Center yesterday.

On Monday, Western Police District station 4 commander Supt. Manolo Martinez told the INQUIRER that Quinit has been in a coma at the hospital since Saturday night after undergoing hazing by members of the Samahang Ilokano (SI) fraternity.

Martinez said his men saw Quinit unconscious and unmoving when they checked the student at the hospital.

"We stand by our findings," Martinez said, adding they have pictures to show Quinit's condition after he was brought to UDMC.

Martinez also reported the arrest of three alleged members of the fraternity and the manhunt for two others.

Those arrested and charged with violation of the Anti-hazing Law were Robert James Aladin, Mcrey Patiten and Aureo Galang. The two who remain at large are Jose Cuelo and James Asperer.

The five were identified by a 20-year-old witness as the ones who were with Quinit when the hazing was conducted.

The witness earlier told police that the suspects, along with Quinit and a 17-year-old applicant to the fraternity, went to his house on Friday last week to hold the initiation rites. While inside, he said he heard a paddle being used.

Clandestine group

In his statement, Mateo said it is the official policy of Mapua not to recognize any fraternity nor condone any act of violence, including hazing and frat rumbles, especially those happening in the campus.

He also said that the Samahang Ilokano fraternity, which conducted the initiation rites, is a clandestine organization not recognized by Mapua.

"Consequently, Mapua is disclaiming responsibility and liability for the incident," Mateo added.

He also said Mapua would take the necessary steps to prevent similar incidents from happening again.

Earlier, Martinez had sought the support of Mapua officials in tracking down two fraternity members implicated in the alleged hazing of a fellow student.

Martinez said the school had agreed to provide useful information that would help the police's search for the suspects.

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gusto ba ng mga
Erap loyalists?**

Ang hinala ng marami, nagkaayusan na ang kampo ni Estrada at ang Malacanang. Bumabait daw si GMA kay Erap. Kung ito'y totoo: may epekto ba sa mga loyalista ni Estrada? Ang sagot nina columnist Manuel Quezon III at PMAP head Ronald Lumbao, ngayong alas-10 ng gabi, sa INQTV on ABC.

ABC

BASKETBALL: NBA-Spurs vs Grizzlies; 9 a.m. (r-8 p.m.); Solar Sports—Vastly improved Memphis attempts to upset defending champion San Antonio one more time.

NBA Greatest Games-Knicks vs Wizards (4/14/03); 12 noon; Solar Sports—Michael Jordan makes his final home appearance in Washington. Schedules subject to change without prior notice.



WEDNESDAY,
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Feliciano-Manotoc battle seen in NGAP

By Jong Arcano

A GROUP led by multititled golfer Tommy Manotoc will challenge the long reign of the present board of the National Golf Association of the Philippines (NGAP) when the country's governing body for golf holds its biennial election on April 26.

The election was originally set for March 30 but a board resolution reset it to April 26. The 30-day notice will give member clubs ample time to regain their voting rights under the NGAP's amnesty program.

An INQUIRER source said the 13-man slate of the Manotoc group, made up of top officials from various golf clubs all over the country, is already complete and ready for the big showdown with the incumbent

NGAP board headed by two-term president Rod Feliciano.

The same source said that while Manotoc's group counts on the support of exclusive clubs, the incumbent board banks on public clubs, particularly courses controlled by the military.

Three former military top brass serve on the present board.

Under NGAP rules, the number of votes a club gets depends on the



FELICIANO

MANOTOC

size of its membership. A club gets three votes for the first 300 members and an additional vote for every 100 members thereafter.

At least 50 clubs are expected to avail themselves of the amnesty and re-apply with the NGAP. Each club needs to pay a fee of P10,000.

The Manotoc group has held several meetings and consultations with club representatives to present its two-year development program.

Manotoc's development program also focuses on the training of a pool of talents from all NGAP member clubs for inclusion to the national team.

The incumbent officers of the NGAP are Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita, honorary chair; Feliciano, president; Adm. Luisito Fernandez, vice president; Benigno Gopez, secretary general; Alice Andrada, treasurer; Commodore Danny Pizarro, auditor, and directors Andy Dumlaog, Jun Galindez, Anthony Sasin, Vicente Santos, Fernando Cojuangco, Boy Lantin and Renato Dychangco.

SOUTHERN LADIES Roberto, Villaroman set out as favorites

LORA Roberto and Carnelette Villaroman are expected to fight for top honors when the 41st Southern Ladies Open Golf Championships get under way today at the Bacolod Golf and Country Club at Hacienda Binitin in Murcia, Bacolod City.

Although Roberto and Villaroman, both members of the national training pool, are fancied to prevail in the championship division, the likes of Lucy Landicho and Lina de Guzman of Cangolf, Aileen Rose Yao and Karen Buenaventura of Manila Golf Club are given equal chances to pull off a surprise or two in the three-day event organized by the NGAP.

Competition is also keen in classes A, B, C, D and the Senior category, which features players 60 years old and above.

ry, which features players 60 years old and above.

Negros Occidental Gov. Joseph Marañon, Bacolod City Mayor Joy Valdez, Alice L. Andrada, chair of the ladies committee and NGAP treasurer, and host club president Alfredo Montelibano will hit the ceremonial drive at 9 a.m.

The annual event is staged in cooperation with the host club and sponsored by DHL Worldwide Express, WWW Express, Petron Corp. Philippine Sports Commission, Gopez Corp., Sugarland Hotel, Directories Philippines Corp., Hans Brumann Jeweler, Casino Filipino Hotel, Mitsubishi Motors, Vice Admiral Luisito Fernandez, Bredco, and Nestlé Waters Phils. Inc.

About time RP wins Olympic gold—FPJ

IF FERNANDO Poe Jr. wins the presidency, sports will be one of his priorities.

Veering away from what he describes as the "usual political statements," Poe yesterday urged the nation to support Filipino athletes competing in the Olympic Games in Athens in August.

Describing himself as a true sportsman and a big sports fan, Poe said Filipinos have long been waiting for an Olympic gold medal.

"It would be a big success if one of our countrymen wins an Olympic gold," said the candidate. "Sports is one of the vital foundations of a healthy society and helps bring out the competitiveness in the Filipino."

Poe proposes several sports programs, including the "Bayani ng Bayan," which he describes as a "medal-production program for Pinoy athletes," and the "Palaro sa Bawat Barangay," a grassroots approach to sports talent identification, skills training and education and development.

He said the barangay Palaro will be a mass-based sports program aimed at encouraging future world champions to pick up a sport at an early age.

"We will create a sports calendar that will work, with a synchronized roster anchored on the Palaro sa Bawat Barangay," he said. "It will be a continuing program where top athletes will advance to the Regional Games."



FPJ: Olympic victory long overdue

A noted horseowner and one of the leading supporters of the country's horseracing industry, Poe is also a basketball fan, a billiards enthusiast and boxing practitioner.

Under Poe's progressive sports program, top performers in the Regional Games will advance to the National Championships. At this level, the government will work together with the national sports associations and the Philippine Olympic Committee.

The POC, in turn, will identify talents who will be given a chance to represent the country in various international competitions.

"The Regional and National Championships shall be biennial events, held in between the Asian Games and the Olympics, for which the National Games are designed, and should not be interrupted," Poe explained.

"We also believe that government should fully support elite sports, provide our top athletes with venues that would make them perform at par with their international counterparts, and encourage them to pursue quality education through scholarships that would come in handy after their retirement."

"We will also encourage the POC and the Philippine Sports Commission to select priority sports, which will be given special support in terms of the training of top athletes. We will do this in our quest to win our very first Olympic gold medal."

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Rejuvenated Beermen, Phone Pals part ways

SAN Miguel Beer and Talk 'N Text dispute the solo leadership even as Shell and Red Bull Barako try to sustain their recovery in the Gran Matador PBA Fiesta Conference today at the Araneta Coliseum.

Unbeaten in three games, the Phone Pals meet their match in the in-form Beermen, with Asi Taulava and Randy Holcomb expected to slug it out with San Miguel Beer's Art Long and Dorian Peña.

"We'll have our hands full against Talk 'N Text. We have to come out focused when we meet them," said the 6-foot-8 Long, who sees his low-post battle against Taulava and Holcomb as his toughest test so far.

STANDINGS	W	L
Talk 'N Text	3	0
San Miguel	2	0
Ginebra	2	1
Coca-Cola	2	1
Alaska	2	1
Red Bull	1	1
Shell	1	2
Purefoods	1	3
FedEx	0	2
Sta. Lucia	0	3

GAMES TODAY (Araneta Coliseum)

4:45 p.m.—San Miguel vs TNT

7:10 p.m.—Red Bull vs Shell

As tight as the frontline matchup is the backcourt duel, with Talk 'N Text's Jimmy Alapag, Willy Miller, Bong Ravenna and Patrick Fran pitting skills

against San Miguel's Olsen Racela, Dondon Hontiveros, Dale Singson and Joey Mente.

"They can put a body on Taulava and my other players as well. I'm expecting a down-the-wire contest," said Talk 'N Text coach Joel Banal.

Coach Jong Uichico and the Beermen are unbeaten following back-to-back routs of the FedEx Express and the Barangay Ginebra Kings.

Meanwhile, Shell has brought in Brian Wethers, a 6-foot-5 former University of California-Berkeley mainstay, to replace Marek Ondera, who sprained his ankle against Purefoods during their out-of-town sortie in General Santos City last week.

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Dayrit: Not a single centavo from PSC

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WE WON'T get a single centavo from the Philippine Sports Commission.

Taking that position, Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit yesterday declared that the POC will foot the bill for the 2005 Southeast Asian Games organization, which he claimed is already in place.

Dayrit said the POC will raise

the funds necessary for the hosting of the SEAG through the marketing of the biennial event and that the PSC would do well not to meddle with the organizational plans.

"There are three aspects of the SEA Games, said Dayrit during the PSA Forum at the Manila Pavilion.

"One is the national team preparation, the second is the facilities, while the third is organization.

Since the PSC is in charge of the first two aspects, Dayrit said the PSC "should not get involved with the organization, because they will get their hands full with the team training and facilities."

But PSC chair Eric Buhain said they still need clear communication lines with the POC because the PSC will act as the conduit be-

tween the organizers and the different government agencies.

"Even in the organizations, we ought to know their plans because we need to coordinate with agencies like the DILG, Tourism and PNP," said Buhain.

With regard to training of athletes, Buhain stressed that the POC must determine the definite venues to make arrangement with them. "We plan to train these athletes in the actual SEAG venues,"

he said.

Dayrit said the organization, which involve the opening and closing ceremonies, the conduct of the Games, transportation, billeting as well as the day-to-day operation of the Games fall under the jurisdiction of the POC.

He said the Philsoc or the SEAG organizers can put the budget between P300M and P400 million. And not a single centavo from it, according to Dayrit, will come

from the government or the PSC.

Dayrit also made a plea to the PSC "not to use the money intended for the athletes' training for 2005.

"No matter how much you spend for the RMSC, it will still be substandard," said Dayrit. "However, SEAG Federation council members are willing to use the RMSC despite its lack of proper warm-up area. We can still make do with it with little repairs."

Ex-PBA stars pitch in for ailing UP Maroon

A FUND-RAISER like no other.

Coming to the aid of ailing teammate Jon Tabique, the University of the Philippines Fighting Maroons clashed with the SMC All-Stars in an exhibition game recently at the Loyola Center in Quezon City.

Although the Maroons prevailed, 86-82, the outcome wasn't important. What mattered was that the game could spark a life-saver for Tabique, who is battling cancer of the lymph nodes.

The protagonists hope it would prompt other kindred spirits to help the 18-year-old Tabique, whose bright future in basketball suddenly dimmed late last year after he was diagnosed with the disease.

Aside from the ticket sales, the SMC All-Stars, from the coach to the players down to the ball boys, donated their allowances for the day.

"It's a noble gesture from the SMC All-Stars," said UP coach Lito Vergara. "Jon has already undergone chemotherapy. He's in high spirits."

Tabique first felt signs of weakening toward the end of the 2003 UAAP season. It was in late December when he was diagnosed as having



cancer and underwent surgery in January.

Tabique need not despair: Cycling icon Lance Armstrong successfully battled lymph node cancer to win the Tour de France five times.

Those who spearheaded the benefit game were former Fighting Maroons Benjie Paras, Ronald Magsanoc and coach Eric Altamirano. Also present were Samboy Lim, Hector Calma, Vince Hizon, Tony Boy Espinosa, Henry Fernandez, Richie Ticzon, Zaldy Realubit, Chito Loyzaga, Lowell Briones, Bobby Jose and Ronald Magtulis.

For them, it was a good deed for a young co-player in need.

VINCE Hizon (right) greets Tabique before the UP-SMC All Stars game. (Below) Benjie Paras leaps over a player as he goes for a dunk.



SPORTSWATCH

Paro battles power-hitting Rodrigo

TOP-RANKED RP junior bantamweight Sherwin "The Crimson" Paro of Mandaue City stakes his record against the power-hitting Jojo "Rodman" Rodrigo in the elimination round at 9 p.m. tonight of the Philippine Pro-Boxing League (PPBL) on IBC-13. The 21-year-old Paro, a prodigy of the Sammy Gello-Ani stable in Cebu, climbs the ring with a formidable 12-2 win-loss record, with 8 knockouts. He is eyeing a finals encounter with former mentor and reigning RP junior bantam champ Eric "the Maverick" Barcelona. Under the grueling four-stage PPBL format, however, Paro needs to rack up three successive victories against top-ranked contenders to get a crack at Barcelona for the championship. In only his first outing in the unique step-ladder tournament supported by Tanduay Rhum and Lactovital, Paro cannot be complacent against the 21-year-old Rodrigo, who is ranked No. 12 by the PBF. Barcelona battles reigning PBF king Rosellito Campana in the same program next week. Waiting for the last two victors are six other contenders who earlier disposed of their respective opponents in the elimination round. They are RP No. 3 flyweight Franklin Macalibo, RP No. 7 bantam Allan Fuentes, RP No. 12 flyweight Mark Sales, RP No. 9 superbantam Robert Dallsay, PBF No. 10 flyweight Jimboy Rodriguez and PBF No. 12 junior bantam Tata Polinar.

Manny gets Ring belt at Palace today

MANNY Pacquiao, acknowledged as the world's finest featherweight, formally receives the prestigious belt of Ring Magazine today in ceremonies to be attended by President Macapagal-Arroyo at the Malacañang Palace. Pacquiao will be awarded the belt of the "Bible of Boxing" by no less than the magazine's editor and boxing historian Nigel Collins, who flew in from the United States for the occasion. Before he proceeds to the Palace for the 9 a.m. rites, the ring idol from Gen. Santos City will pay a courtesy call on Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, who has made him an adopted son of the city. This marks the first time that a Ring Magazine belt will be awarded to a boxer in the presence of a country's president, said Ted Lerner, the magazine's Philippine correspondent.

Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor

Solar airs PBL's 'Heart of Champion'

SOLAR Sports will telecast a one-hour special of the Philippine Basketball League (PBL), dubbed "Heart of a Champion," on March 14 on Channel 29. The show highlights the exploits of Fash Liquid Laundry Detergent which made the 2003 season a dream year for the Lamojayan Corp. franchise. Fash won both the Unity and Platinum Cups. Formerly carrying the colors of Hapee Toothpaste, Fash first stamped its class in the Unity Cup by beating Viva Mineral Water-Far Eastern University in a thriller of a title series. Fash then capped its amazing year by also outdistancing pre-tournament favorite Welcoat Paints in the Platinum Cup in a series that accomplished several firsts in the league, including the number of fans that watched the games at the PhilSports Arena.

PBF title tiff headlines Carmona card

CARMONA in Cavite comes alive again on March 17 with the staging of the "Bakbakan sa Carmona" starting at 5 p.m. at the town plaza featuring the PBF championship match between Jack Maldecir and Jun Erahm. Maldecir, the country's No. 5 junior flyweight, and Erahm of L&M Gym headline the 32-round fight card promoted by LS International and Jun Sarreal and held in coordination with Carmona Mayor Roy Loyola. The boxfest is part of the town's Serteo Festivities, a grand festival held on Feb. 16-22 in which the town raffled off communal lands to residents. The grand festival was a first for the town and was accredited by the Department of Tourism as a destination site in its Wealth of Wonders (WOW) program. In the supporting main event Rey Almonicar, a protégé of Marty Eiorde, the registered manager of Manny Pacquiao, faces Marlon Limpido of L & M gym over 8 rounds.

Las Piñas Coliseum stages 3-cocker

COCKFIGHTING enthusiasts will be treated to fast-paced encounters again in the 3-cock derby sponsored by Sagupaan 3000 tonight at the air-conditioned Las Piñas Coliseum. The derby stakes a cash pot of P300,000 for an entry fee of P5,500, said hosts Eric and Jonjon Casador. Entries may be submitted not later than 2 p.m. today. For details, call 873-1040. Another 3-cock derby promoted by Jhesel Farms and Jover Dilao will be held at the cockpit on March 17. Vhon Agwini and Yoyoy Las Piñas stage their 3-cock derby on March 24. Last Saturday, Golden Circle 1 of Malt Bitanga emerged as solo champion in the "Battle of Heavyweights 7-Cock Derby" at the cockpit.

100-fight PCC derby under way

MORE than 100 fights are on tap in a P300,000 special 4-cock derby today at the Pasay City Cockpit. The hackfights sponsored by Sagupaan Hammer, Sagupaan Mite Free, Sagupaan B-50 Forten and Sagupaan Complexor 3000, starts at 2 p.m., said PCC pit managers Oscar Gonzales, Eric dela Rosa and Butch Olan. Today's host is sportsman Bobot Yu of Valenzuela. Meanwhile, another 4-cock event sizzles on Friday, March 12 to be hosted by the RCD Pasay Group. At stake is P300,000 for an entry fee of P10,000. The Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association Challenge to Champions 5-Cock Derby unfolds on March 15, 17 and 19. For inquiries, call 843-1890 and 843-1746.

Race 1--1. Astig 2. The Virginian 3. Rivaldo 4. She Jin-sky	Paradise Water/Bright Leader 4. Rock's Dragon 5. Dedicated 6. Maniaman
Race 2--1. Dennis D Menace 2. May's Magic 3. Princess Malinda 4. Kusang Loob 5. Light of My Life	Race 6--1. Divine Diva 2. Santry Forex 3. Inner Wheeler 4. Dancing Mistress
Race 3--1. Agrey Special 2. Big Kahuna 3. Gentleman's Lady 4. Regal Reality	Race 7--1. Mr. Bonjing 2. Black Rose 3. Regalite 4. Gold Collar 5. Red Phoenix
Race 4--1. Tribeca 2. Adrenaline 3. Astime-gosby/Man River 4. Better Harry 5. Lady Be Gold	Race 8--1. I Swear 2. Prince Nicholas 3. Hurricane Doding 4. Lady in Red
Race 5--1. Deputy Parade 2. Portal Dancer 3.	Race 9--1. Dato's Pride/Mika Mix 2. Real Gem 3. Millennium Man 4. Arbitor 5. Demolition Jack 6. Schwarzenegger



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AT SLLP BY MR. 999

His handlers must save Pacquiao from himself

WHETHER you're for FPJ or GMA, isn't about time we made a little assessment of Manny Pacquiao's current condition?

We've got to check on Pacquiao's fighting worth because, based on his wild regimen, it would appear he has put his money on self-styled billionaire Eddie Gil in the Maytime presidential race.

Anyway, Pacquiao says he draws power from native food; but his skills, he swears, are derived from imported wisdom.

Of course, he's quick to explain that his in-born might is God-given.

He would hit his opponent, Pacquiao loves to say, then would leave everything to the Lord above. So far, his Creator has been both generous and cooperative.

These details were bared by the world boxing sensation in a recent visit to the INQUIRER where he had a free-wheeling conversation with owners of the newspaper and several editors.

By food serving as knockout fuel, Pacquiao obviously meant fresh, juicy tuna, which his native Gen. Santos City is known for all over the world.

The fabulous Freddie Roach, who molded him from a raw, often tactless brawler into what he is today, is the imported commodity that has injected sharp, scientific sense into Pacquiao's spine.

Fine. But the one thing that bothers local boxing followers is Pacquiao's open refusal to start serious training.

Last time this reporter bumped into Pacquiao, during the Philippine Sportswriters Awards night at the Manila Pavilion on Jan. 9, he confided he has not stepped into the gym since his conquest of Barrera in mid-November.

Has he ever started working out real hard? None that he knows of, said Rod Nazario, Pacquiao's business manager.

If Pacquiao had spent precious hours in one place, these were wasted, reliable reports said, inside pool parlors.

Well, if it's Pacquiao's plan to confuse his

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad



handlers, not to mention his countless admirers, he has more than succeeded.

But if it's his intention to mislead his would-be opponent, he's gravely misleading himself.

This point is being brought up here because, picking it from his own pronouncements, Pacquiao would most likely favor and follow pointers from a foreigner.

And who could be a better preacher on how to remain as world champ than Mr. Nigel Collins, editor of Ring Magazine, who came over last week, got stood up by Pacquiao in Parañaque last Saturday, and had yet to see the conqueror of Marco Antonio Barrera in person as of lunchtime yesterday.

Collins says: A world champion need not get into shape; he MUST always be in shape.

That, boxing folks, was the most remarkable sentence uttered by the venerable visitor, editor of the magazine generally regarded as the bible of boxing, in his first contact with members of local media.

Quoted by Ronnie Nathanielsz of the Manila Standard, Collins adds, "You can't change that and you can't take back the past."

Collins has also advised the Pacquiao management team to play "hard ball."

"You can get them angry, but that's better than losing the fight," says Collins.

He adds: "He (Pacquiao) should already be in fighting shape so that, when he goes to Roach's Wild Card Gym, the remaining weeks they can work on strategy."

Look, if Nigel Collins had come here only to award the prestigious Ring championship belt to Pacquiao, his trip would've have not been worth it.

In fact, based on his actuations, Pacquiao himself did not seem too interested in yet another decoration around his waist.

Mr. Collins may have to be told that his trip to Manila, based on the run-around he's getting, could be more significant to Malacañang's No. 1 tenant than to Pacquiao himself.

Just the same, Filipino fight fans should be extremely thankful to Mr. Collins for coming here to spread the gospel of sensible ringmanship.

Mr. Collins is not saying it but, if Pacquiao were made to face Juan Manuel Marquez in a month's time, the GenSan sensation would need more than a miracle and ample assistance from Somebody Up there just to make a respectable showing.

"Marquez is probably the most dangerous fight that Manny can take right now," Collins explains. "Marquez is a little bit like a younger Barrera. He can box and he can slug. He's very skillful."

This reporter had seen Marquez dump the sensational Derrick Gainer.

Marquez, owner of the WBA and IBF 126-lbs crowns, delivers the punches that Pacquiao is most allergic to: the inside, lightning-quick snap to the chin, and the curling, thudding digs to the rib cage.

In fact, Freddie Roach himself was not too keen on Pacquiao taking on Marquez immediately after Barrera.

But there may no turning back now.

Latest reports from the Pacquiao camp says the national boxing treasure may have to fight in a May 8 card put up by HBO, not on May 22 as originally stipulated in a contract signed in New York last month.

The prayer here is for Pacquiao to be given another opponent, instead of the fearsome Marquez.

Of course, nobody could stop Pacquiao from bragging he could handle the terrific Mexican. Anyway, if his handlers can't save Pacquiao from himself, they must find a quick cure.

They've got to stop their boy from deluding himself.

XC70

THE POWER...

S80

THE LUXURY...

PBA: Will spotty officiating spoil the day?

OF LATE, I have noticed that the fans have started coming back to watch the games of the PBA Fiesta Conference, a good sign for the beleaguered league which has been suffering from falling gate receipts and slowly losing its once lofty standing as the country's most profitable and premier sports organization.

"Nowadays, the teams are playing with much intensity because the results carry much weight," said a loyal follower of the 30-year-old Philippine Basketball Association. "The teams are now more competitive because commissioner Noli Eala wisely heeded the clamor of many to revert to the old format where victories in the elimination round are carried over in the quarterfinals and semifinal series.

Batang Red Bull coach Yeng Guiao was one of those against that ill-conceived format, saying that it did not reward the teams that played well. "There was no incentive for the top teams," he stressed.

Meanwhile, at the resumption of the Fiesta Conference at the Araneta Coliseum today, expect the fans to fill the seats of the cavernous Big Dome when league leaders Talk 'N Text, (3-0) and San Miguel Beer (2-0) clash in the opening setto, followed by the game between Red Bull Barako (1-1) and Shell Turbochargers (1-2). And because the teams will surely go for broke, many are hoping that their day will not be spoiled by spotty officiating just like what happened in the recent Red Bull-Sta. Lucia Realty encounter where Guiao's charges won, 85-84, despite several biased calls against them.

I hope this incident is not repeated tonight. Commissioner Eala should warn the referees not to be remiss in their duty because it is their responsibility and moral obligation to the fans and the team owners to make the calls as they see them without the slightest hint that they are influenced by unscrupulous people. The referees must always render quality officiating because some of them have become a big letdown.

OLYMPIC GAMES: WHAT WOMEN WANT TO SEE ON TV In a survey of about 10,000 people conducted by NBC, the American television network, it found out that in its Olympic coverage, there are more women viewers (51 percent) than men (49 percent). But what do women want? Gymnastics, more than anything. According to Fortune magazine, women prefer gymnastics (20.6 percent) followed by swimming (19.4) and cycling (19.3). Also in the ratings, diving had (18.8 percent), track and field (17.4), canoeing (17), equestrian events (16.1), synchronized swimming (15.5), volleyball (15.3), basketball (15.1), tennis (15.0), wrestling (14.6) and boxing (11.6).

Basketball, despite the Dream Team hype, did not rate well among the women while boxing, which gave the United States past Olympic heroes like Muhammad Ali and Sugar Ray Leonard, was all but banished from prime time, along with wrestling and weightlifting and any other sport event tainted by too much grunting, groaning, sweating and pain.

Boxing drives viewers away, according to the NBC survey. "Women and children won't stand for it."

Also, according to NBC, women and men viewers tend to watch the games differently. Women care more about people, men about action.

Said Nicholas Schiavone, NBC's senior vice president for research: "Women see the Olympics inside out. They come in through the athlete, and they go out through the event. They tell us, 'Look at what it took to get there; look at the courage, the sacrifice, the effort.' Men see the event, the competition, the race, and only later do they find the person in the excitement."

NBC, which lost \$98.6 million on the 1992 Barcelona Olympics despite high ratings, is expecting to make profits in future Games. Dick Ebersol, president of NBC Sports, has inked a deal worth \$3.5 billion for the rights to five more Summer and Winter Games for the years 2000 to 2008.

CLEAN LIVING



Manolo R. Iñigo

Prisaa backs BAP leaders

THE PRIVATE Schools Athletic Association (Prisaa) and the Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP) yesterday agreed to forge a stronger partnership.

In a meeting at the Manila Peninsula, Prisaa national chair Emmanuel Y. Angeles told BAP secretary general Graham Lim that his association, which boasts 1,330 schools nationwide, recognizes the BAP—which is engaged in a bitter power struggle with the Basketball

Association of the Philippines Inc.—as a member of the international sporting community, specifically the Fiba.

Angeles, also the president and CEO of the Clark Development Corp., said Prisaa's member-schools will join the National Juniors Basketball Championship to be held in Palawan in October.

"The Prisaa fully supports BAP and its programs for amateur basketball. And we intend to be actively involved," said Angeles.



NBA ACTION

Los Angeles' Gary Payton (right) and Utah's Carlos Arroyo chase a loose ball during their NBA game Monday. Complete results: Philadelphia 97, Milwaukee 92; Cleveland 108, Atlanta 102; Dallas 103, Phoenix 90; Utah 88, LA Lakers 83.

REUTERS

Corporate Cup fires off today at John Hay

PHILIPPINE Sports Commission Chair Eric Buhain and Fil-Estate's top honcho Bob Sobrepeña will try to lead their teams to victory in the 16th edition of the Corporate Cup golf championship starting today at the Camp John Hay Golf Club in Baguio City.

The teams of Buhain and Sobrepeña are among the 23 local and foreign squads entered in the 36-hole competition which stakes an eight-day, seven-night Mexican Riviera Cruise and round-trip tickets to Los Angeles courtesy of Royal Caribbean International (RCI) and Northwest Airlines as hole-in-one prizes.

They will be vying for the honors in five different handicap divisions.

Camp John Hay Development Corp., Fil-Estate Group of Companies, PLDT Business Solutions, Dynamic Sports Corp., CAP Philippines, Wilson, Le Chef and Intex Telecom Systems are the sponsors for this year's tournament.

After yesterday's free practice rounds, tournament founder Cecil Hechanova said that most of the entries praised the excellent condition of the course.

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FOXTROT
BY BILL AMEND

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NEVER TELL SOMEONE YOUR MATH GRADES.
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A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA

AYOKO TALAGA NG DEBATE SA TV
MAS GUSTO KO SA SLUM AREAS
BAKIT AYAW MO BA SA TV?
WALANT TALENT FEE YUN!

MARVIN
BY TOM ARMSTRONG

CHECK OUT THE HOT-LOOKING BABE HEADING OUR WAY, JUAN!
SHE'S EXACTLY THE TYPE OF GIRL I'M ATTRACTED TO
...PETITE

PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR

KUNG ANG IPALALIT NATIN SA INCLUMBENT AY 'YUNG KING E BAKA WALA TAYONG MARA-TING DAHIL PAISA-ISA LANG ANG HAKBANG NITO...
'YUNG QUEEN NAMAN E MALAYO ANG NARARATING PERO DEADLY KUNG KUMAIN
'YUNG BISHOP E IISANG PATAH LANG ANG DINADAANAN. BAKA MAGING PATAGILID ANG USAD NG BANSA.
DAPAT MAGSIKAP TAYONG MAGING PAWN. PURO PASULONG ANG TAKED. PAG NARATING ANG DULO E PWEDENG MAGING KAHIT ANONG PIYESA.
WAT DA NIEL YU TALKIN' BOUT??

BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT

I WONDER WHAT WREN IS THINKING RIGHT NOW!
DO YOU WANT ME TO ASK HER?
YOU CAN TALK TO HER??
HEY, WREN. HAMMIE WANTS TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING.
UH HUH... UH HUH... THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT.
SHE SAYS SHE WAS JUST THINKING WHAT A BIG STINK-BRAIN YOU ARE.
MOM! WREN IS CALLING ME NAMES!!

MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL

MOOCH - YOU HAVE THAT WILD LOOK IN YOUR EYES AGAIN.
MEEOW
I DO?

ATOMO AND WEBBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO

I APOLOGIZE FOR MY OUTBURST THE OTHER DAY. YES, YOU'RE RIGHT. MAYBE THIS TRIP HAS BECOME BORING.
I PROMISE TO CHANGE THE ITINERARY AND INCLUDE THE OCCASIONAL GUT-WRENCHING ADRENALINE RUSH IN OUR ACTIVITIES.
BUT BECAUSE OF THE UNEXPECTED CHANGES IN OUR SCHEDULE, THERE WILL BE A SERVICE CHARGE AT THE END OF THIS TRIP FOR THE PAPERWORK.

DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS

NO ONE'S PAYING ATTENTION TO OUR POSTERS! HOW ABOUT AN EARTHQUAKE?
REMEMBER GOD

HOROSCOPE
BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have a sweet, tender, sensitive heart. You are deeply emotional. You love life, but you never lose your appreciation of those who are less fortunate than you. You have a deep need to understand yourself. Family is important to you. The year ahead is full of exciting beginnings in new directions. You're on a new road!

Birthdate of: Chuck Norris, actor; Edie Brickell, musician; Sharon Stone, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You feel a bit like a sleuth today. There's a bit of Sherlock Holmes in you that makes you want to investigate and get to the bottom of anything that comes your way.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You have a good chance to please the boss today. You won't have to work very hard to do it. Be punctual and just do your job, and you'll come out smelling like a rose.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Don't be afraid to ask a parent or parental figure for something that you want today. It doesn't mean you'll get it, but this is a good day to try for it.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You can learn something important from someone else today. (Probably a female.) Be patient and cooperative with everyone today.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Sweet flirtations are promising today! You would definitely rather be playing or goofing off instead of working. Give yourself a little recess if you can.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You enjoy pleasing your closest friends and loved ones. You like to anticipate their needs. You have always believed that actions speak louder than words. (And they do.)

BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON

I CAN'T BELIEVE I FORGOT THAT TODAY WAS OUR ANNIVERSARY!
AND I DIDN'T GET ANYTHING FOR LUV-WHAT A DISASTER!
WHERE AM I GOING TO FIND SOMETHING AT THIS HOUR? ALL THE GIFT SHOPS ARE CLOSED...
I HOPE SHE'S HUNGRY!

MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

KAHIT KAILAN, HINDI AKO MAGKAKA-BISYO PARA PAG MAY BABY NA KO, WALANG PROBLEMA...
SIGURADONG MALUSOG AT MAGANDA SIYA...
OPS, DUN KA MAGKAKA-PROBLEMA...
BAKA MAGDUDA SILA NA BABY MO YON!

KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA

I CANABIT NA NILA SA MAY WAITING SHED.
AYAN, OK NA!
US, TEKA...
MERON PA, O... NALAGLAG ATA AKIN NA, KABIT NATIN.
SAYANTALA, SA NALALAPIT AM EUSAL NG FINE ARTS...
TSONG, NAKITA MO BA 'YUNG ASSHAI-MENT KO NA SELF PORTRAIT DITO? NAWAWALA, EN...
BAKA HINANGAL LANG PALADAS.

LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

POD, MAY PERA PO BA KAYO?
PUDE PO BANG MAKATANG? WALANG-WALA PO AKO...
PERA???
AND NGA BA YUN? ANG TAGAL KO NANG HINDI NAKAKAKITA NUN, A...! AND NGA BA ANG ITSURA NUN???

TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

DRUMSTICK KO? E, DI MAWASAY KA RING MAG DRUMS TULDOK KO?

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. Gratuities
5. Hari
9. Replay gimmick
14. Icy coating
15. Oater actor Jack
16. Detroit player
17. Currency introduced in 1999
18. Miss in Fr.
19. Divvy out
20. NASA's ISS partner
21. Literary critiques
23. Ward off
25. Peggy or Spike
26. Actress Judd
28. Pugilists' grp.
30. Junk e-mail
34. Munchausen, e.g.
35. Geoffrey of fashion
37. Poet's palindrome
38. Detailed information

DOWN

1. Fare... well
2. Promissory notes
3. Repeat, but not verbatim
4. Theater-sign letters
5. Recollection
6. Metal mixture
7. Lecture
8. Part of USA
9. Barrel part
10. " of the Field"
11. Eyeball rudely
12. Tabby talk
13. Table scraps
21. Sutter and Spinner
22. Large African antelope
24. Hanging to one side
26. Opening letters
27. Sub-Saharan region
28. Operate a loom
29. Kingsley and Stiller
31. Magazine
32. Burning crime
33. Runs into
35. Irritating child
36. Dislodges
39. Benefactor Yale
40. Adams or Falco
45. " Fideles"
47. Marina of "Star Trek TNG"
49. Father of King Arthur
50. Yo-Yo Ma's instrument
51. Hey, you!
52. breve
53. Island of the Marianas
54. B.C. luzz
55. At hand
57. Walking stick
58. Joule fractions
61. Hot tub

By Matt Skoczen Reading, PA 3/10/04

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

L	A	T	I	-	V	A	S	T	-	J	I	N	A	H
O	R	E	C	-	I	D	L	L	-	G	I	V	E	
S	C	A	M	-	J	M	A	L	-	J	O	N	E	R
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S	E	W	E	L	-	S	O	O	L	-	N	O	R	M

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Movie stars, fashion models in Hair Asia

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3	LOVE ACTUALLY 11:40, 2:30, 5:20 8:10, 11:00 R-18
4	GOTHIKA 11:15, 1:30, 3:50 6:10, 8:30, 10:50 R-13

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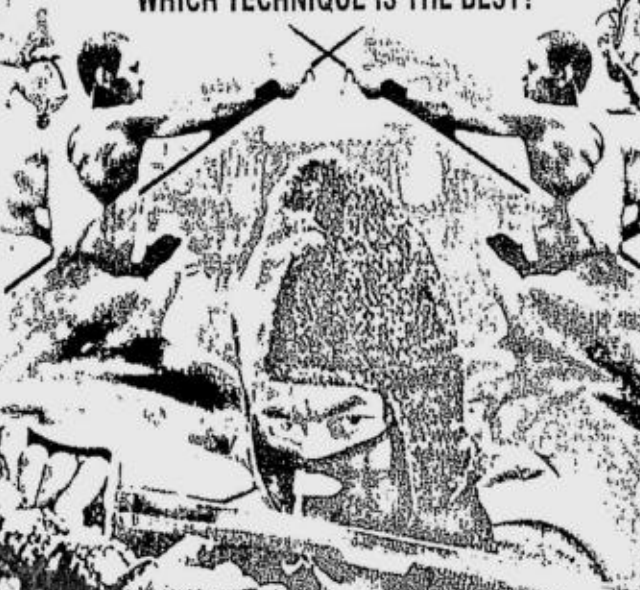
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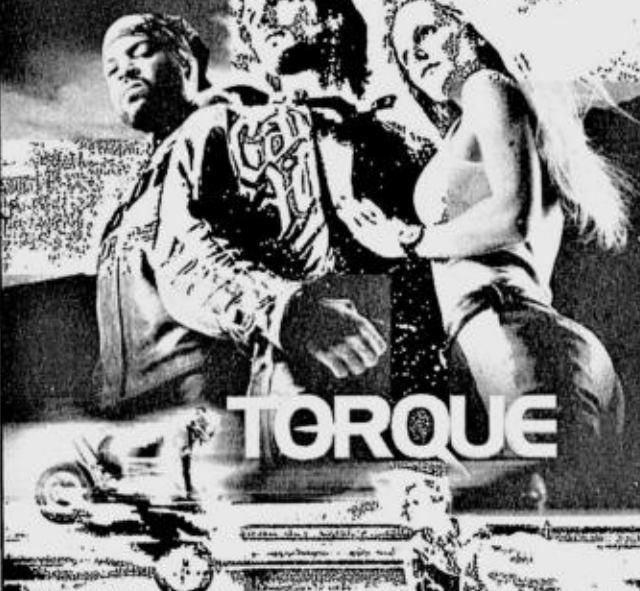
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Ali 2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
Ali 3	HIDALGO
Ali 4	GOTHIKA
Ali 5	LOVE ACTUALLY
Ali 6	LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO
Ali 7	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

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ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR

NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA

A	LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO
B	
C	

MANDALUYONG CITY

SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-2979 / 633-7851 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION

CAINTA RIZAL

STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MILAN
CINEMA-2	LANGIT MO KALIGAYAHAN KO
CINEMA-3	DRAGON VS. NINJA
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	CARMEN
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	KUYA
CINEMA-6	U-BELT
CINEMA-7	COLD MOUNTAIN
CINEMA-8	ANNIE B.
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	TORQUE
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	HIDALGO
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
CINEMA-12	LOVE ACTUALLY
CINEMA-14	GOTHIKA
CINEMA-15	GRUDGE 2

LORES

CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN

(LAS PINAS)	HULOHAN
CINEMA-1	ANNIE B.
CINEMA-2	COLD MOUNTAIN
CINEMA-4	THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE

UNIWE COASTAL MALL

(PAHANAQUE)	SAHAGUN
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SEDA

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JESSICA NAPIER SIMON BOSSERT MOLLIE K. O'LEARY KYLE MACLACHLAN

A 10

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2004

Martin Nievera in year-long Las Vegas show

CONCERT king Martin Nievera has returned after a two-month engagement as headliner at the Golden Nugget hotel in Las Vegas, US.

Negotiations are now underway for a one-year engagement at the hotel to start late this year until January 2006.

Martin will take his successful Golden Nugget show in a tour of a dozen cities in the US in mid-April.

After a two-week breather in Manila, the singer will return to Las Vegas for a special show for Philippine Airlines, which will make its inaugural flight to the city on March 17.

Rudy Manlapaz . . .

STEVE MARTIN

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www.carmenfilm.com a film by VINCENTE ARANDA

From page A32

Shortly after publication, First Gentleman Mike Arroyo gave Manlapaz both a wheelchair and an airport on Labor Day last year.

His story also prompted Filipino readers from all over the world to ask how they could help the man.

"A reader from Japan contacted us recently," Raquel said.

She said her father had wanted to contact his show biz friends like comedians German Moreno, Dolphy, deposed president Joseph Estrada and presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

"He said he wanted to see them," recalled Raquel. "But I guess, except Mr. Estrada, all of them were busy with their commitments."

During the interview, he asked this writer, "Please help me. If you write my story, then maybe FPJ (Fernando Poe Jr.) or Sharon (Cuneta) would remember me. I worked with them before all this happened to me."

He wanted an airport so that "I don't have to wake up my children when I get hungry at night."

Best years . . .

From page A31

to for Female Chorus Class (14-20 years old).

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CINEMA 1
HIDALGO
11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00
P13

CINEMA 2
LOVE ACTUALLY
11:05, 1:50, 4:30, 7:10, 10:00
R18

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GOTHIKA R13 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 8:00, 10:30	CARMEN R18 12:30, 3:00, 5:20, 8:00, 10:30	HIDALGO PG13 12:15, 2:45, 5:15, 7:45, 10:20

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Camino

MIKE ARROYO BENEFICIARY Rudy Manlapaz dies

By Marinel R. Cruz

COMEDIAN Rudy Manlapaz prepared for his death a month before he succumbed to prostate cancer yesterday.

His daughter Raquel yesterday told INQUIRER Entertainment that the comedian had called the owner of a funeral parlor in Parañaque and gave him instructions for his burial.

"It was his wish to be cremated," Raquel said. "He also wanted the wake to be held in his house."

Manlapaz, who was a sad man toward the end of his life because of his helplessness and poverty, died of cardiac arrest at 7:30 a.m. yesterday at the Parañaque City Community Hospital, in Sucat, Parañaque. He was 72.

The comedian was rushed to hospital at 3 a.m. yesterday when he had difficulty breathing.

Complications from his prostate



MANLAPAZ didn't want his children to worry. BETOY JOHNSON

cancer triggered the heart attack, Raquel said.

"Daddy wanted everything to be ready when he died. He didn't want us to worry," said Raquel. "Teddy Jose, the owner of Funeraria Jose, was a very good friend of Daddy's. He has been helping us a lot by taking care of everything Daddy needs for his burial free (of charge)."

In his last interview with INQUIRER Entertainment on April 25, 2003 where the comedian was featured in the section's "Yesterday" segment, Manlapaz had confessed that he squandered his money.

"I lived a carefree life back then," he had said. "Life had been so good that my only problem was how to spend all my money."

Manlapaz suffered a stroke in 1990 and had since been in a wheelchair.

His remains lie in state in his home at 7194 Peso Lane Street, Villanueva Village, Sucat, Parañaque.

He is survived by his wife Consuelo, children Romeo, Rosita and Raquel. Cremation at the Manila Memorial Crematorium in Sucat will be announced later.

Manlapaz, was a much sought-after comedian in stage shows and later on in television shows and in movies from the late '50s to the '70s.

He was in sitcoms like "Balitang Barbero" on Channel 11, "Ginang Milyonaryo" on Channel 2, and, in the early '80s, on "Cafeteria Aroma."

During the INQUIRER interview, Manlapaz had asked for a new wheelchair and an airport that he could place by his bed. The requests were published in the "Yesterday" story on Manlapaz.

RUDY/A30

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"Narito Lang Ako"

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Interpreter: Michael Josh Santana



Congratulations to the winners
at sa inyong mainit na suporta... Maraming salamat, Kapamilya!

ABS-CBN

Halina Perez burial today

By Romulo O. Ponte
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

STA. MARIA, Laguna—Her classmates and teachers from the Catholic school where she studied are already missing Halina Perez, the bold actress who died in a car crash last week.

Halina, Vanessa May-Anne D. Uri in real life, will be buried today in a local cemetery.

Manuel A. Balela, principal of Sta. Maria Academy where Perez graduated, told INQUIRER that they would miss the actress, who she fondly called Vanessa, during their grand reunion on May 1.

He said Perez studied in the academy through the efforts of her grandmother, a former elementary teacher and devoted churchgoer.

Balela was looking forward to Perez's presence because of her popularity, the principal admitted.

He noticed that her batch mates, one of whom is teaching at the academy, had been excited preparing for the event.

Although he has heard of the bold movies Perez had made, "I have not seen any of those. I am not interested in seeing any of those anyway," Balela said.

Sr. Josefina Valencia, school directress, appealed for compassion for both the actress, who she believed was a victim of circumstance, and for her family.

Valencia made the appeal amid rumors that had circulated on how the actress had lived her life.

She also praised Perez's obvious efforts to help liberate her family from poverty.

The directress also believed that the instability of her family had driven Perez to pursue a show biz career. Her parents broke up when she was still a child.

Will be missed at reunion

Joann J. Robel, a high school classmate of Halina, is now teaching at the academy. She told INQUIRER that she could not believe that the simple and conservative Vanessa that she had known in school would become a bold actress.

Describing her classmate as an ordinary town girl, who dressed conservatively, was mild-mannered and lead a simple lifestyle. Robel recalled that Perez was "obedient, friendly, bright and a regular churchgoer. She was beautiful, she had the height, there was no doubt about that, but there was no sign she would be in the movies. Our classmates were excited that she would be attending our grand reunion on May 1."

Parish priest Fr. Jessie Somosierra, who will officiate in the funeral Mass at 2 p.m. today at the Our Lady of the Holy Angels parish church, expressed sadness and compassion for the actress.

"It is not for any one of us to judge Halina for her actions (bold roles in movies and tabloids). We leave everything to God."

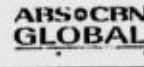
"But just as Jesus forgave the most serious of sinners, there is no reason why I should not forgive her. I'm giving her the benefit of the doubt that perhaps in some moments of her life, she must have reconciled with God," Somosierra said.

The priest felt sorry for the actress because her father (Rene) and mother (Mildred) were still not in good terms.

He hoped that the couple would find peace in their daughter's death.

An unidentified lay minister told the INQUIRER that their far-flung town, which used to be unknown, had been placed on the map because of Halina.

"We are proud that we have a Halina in our midst."



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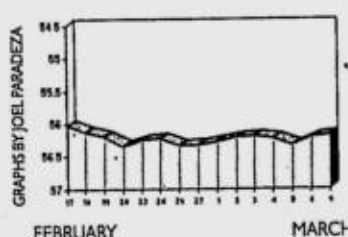
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Stocks hits 1-month low

STOCKS dropped to a one-month closing low yesterday on worries over rising interest rates, which may hurt companies and encourage investors to shift their investments to the fixed-income market.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) was the most active stock as it fell 1.57 percent or P15 to P940.

Analysts said PLDT tracked the direction of its New York-traded American Depositary Receipts, which fell 3.65 percent to \$16.61 on Monday.

"There are threats of higher interest rates both here and in the US that could hamper companies' expansion plans," said AB Capital economic analyst Jose Vistan.

"Many are worried too that the higher interest rates may draw foreign and local players away from the equities market to the fixed-income market."

The main index finished lower for the third straight day, closing 0.89 percent or 13.01 points down at 1,455.75, the lowest close since Feb. 6. The market has lost most of its gains for the year and is up just 0.93 percent.

SM Prime Holdings Inc., the country's largest mall developer, dropped 3.39 percent or 20 centavos to P5.70. The company's 2003 earnings report is expected by next week.

Pilipino Telephone Corp. (Piltel), the third-largest mobile operator and 45-percent owned by PLDT, dropped 3.61 percent or six centavos to P1.60.

Reuters

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas has tightened the guidelines on banks' lending to their own directors, officers, stockholders and related interests (dosri) in a bid to curb excessive credit exposure that could trigger bank failures.

The BSP yesterday said its policy-making Monetary Board had expanded the coverage of dosri lendings, particularly with regards to "related interests," and likewise imposed stiff sanctions against violators.

Under the approved implementing guidelines, these "related interests" are now defined as: any corporation, association or firm which controls directly or indirectly, whether on its own or as part of a group, at least 20 percent of the subscribed capital base of a substantial stockholder of the lending bank or which control majority interest of the bank; any corporation,

association or firm in which the lending bank and/or its parent or subsidiary holds at least 20 percent of the subscribed capital of such corporation, or equity of such association or firm, or has an existing management contract or any similar arrangement with the lending bank or its parent or subsidiary.

"The new guidelines expanding the coverage of dosri limits represent a major initiative that will improve the quality of corporate governance, bolster the domestic capital market and free up credit to small- and medium-sized borrowers," BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said.

"By curbing excessive related-party lending, a major cause of bank failure will be more effectively limited. On the other hand, borrowers will now be subject to better credit discipline which they may have hitherto avoided by borrowing from related banks," he added.

One example of blatant abuse of dosri lending which led to a bank failure in the past was the case of Orient Commercial Banking Corp.

With the tighter regulations, the BSP chief also said that big borrowers would now be forced to look to the domestic capital market to fund their requirements.

The Monetary Board approved the implementing guidelines for Sec. 36 of the General Banking Law of 2000, which limits dosri exposure.

The law likewise prescribes

BSP/B4



BUENAVENTURA

MRT-7 group to seek political risk insurance

By Clarissa S. Batino

PROPOSERS of the \$1.3-billion MRT-7 railway line from Marilao in Bulacan to Quezon Avenue in Edsa are planning to secure political risk insurance from multilateral agencies like the World Bank or the Overseas Private Investment Corp.

A political risk insurance would help Universal LRT Corp., the group that proposed to undertake the MRT-7 project, secure a reasonably priced funding for the project despite the increasing risks in the domestic market.

Universal LRT Corp. chair Roberto de Ocampo said that 75 percent of the project cost would

have to be financed with loans and the remaining 25 percent with shareholders' equity.

He said the group would like to complete the fund-raising in 12 months and to start construction in the next two years.

"The World Bank has indicated that they will be happy to package an international guarantee for this. The OPIC not only expressed interest in the project but also said they would be more than willing to provide this. And that, I think, should assuage the private sector investors that they have a sufficient enough minimization of these risks," the former finance secretary said.

De Ocampo said the group's

proposal was likely to secure the first-pass approval from the inter-agency Investment Coordination Committee in the next 2 weeks.

A first-pass approval is the government's confirmation that the project is important and necessary. The go-ahead is required before the group could convince creditors to finance the project.

De Ocampo, who is also the president of Asian Institute of Management, said the transport department had clarified to the ICC that MRT-7 would not conflict with any other railway project. Previously, there were fears that this line would overlap with MRT-4 or the planned railway from Manila to Novaliches.

Universal LRT Corp. is led by EL International Holdings, a member of the EL Group of Companies of Hong Kong. Other members include Yuchengco-owned EEI Corp., TCGI Engineers, Tyco-subsidary Eart Tech and Alstom Phils.

US-based Tyco is the biggest manufacturer of electrical and electronic components and French firm Alstom is an infrastructure giant.

The group submitted an unsolicited proposal to the transportation department to undertake the 20-kilometer, build-operate-transfer project.

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Trade officials expect BPO investments to double this year

By Ronnel W. Domingo

INVESTMENTS in business process outsourcing are seen to double this year as BPO firms have been reported to perform well, while greater BPO opportunities arise in the country, Trade Secretary Cesar V. Purisima yesterday said.

Data from the Department of Trade and Industry show that investments in the information technology sector post-

ed a 23-percent growth to P6.42 billion in 2003. Of the amount, 69 percent, or P4.46 billion, accounted for investments in call centers.

"BPO is clearly an emerging industry in the Philippines where we have a comparative advantage in terms of manpower skills and IT infrastructure," Purisima said. "I think we could use the edge that we already have in making the BPO industry more competitive."

The official said the strong performance of the call centers could help stop the migration of the labor force, "since a job that earns P15,000 to P20,000 a month here is better than being a domestic helper abroad."

He said that the BPO industry could grow by 780,000 seats worldwide if the United States outsourced even 5 percent of all its backroom services.

"If we could get 20 percent of that

market, we are talking about 180,000 to 200,000 seats," Purisima said.

Purisima recently led the launch of SPI Technologies' new four-story building that highlights its expansion program.

He noted that two-thirds of SPI's 6,000-strong workforce in Asia were from the Philippines.

SPI, Asia's largest independent BPO service provider, is accredited with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority and is start-

ed in 2001 with its facilities at Carmelray Industrial Park II in Calamba, Laguna.

Also, Epixtar Corp. of the United States announced that it has completed the P46-million acquisition of I-Call Global Services Corp.'s call center in Alabang.

Miami-based Epixtar said the move would enable the company to have up to 2,000 seats by August. It is also looking at expanding its business in other parts of the country.

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Gov't borrowing cost rises to 11%

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COST of the government's three-year borrowing rose by 200 basis points to 11 percent during yesterday's auction.

The Bureau of Treasury, however, said the increase in the coupon rate was within acceptable levels.

Although the issuance was over-subscribed by P5.5 billion, the government only raised P740 million. Officials are careful not to further push up the yield of the three-year T-bond.

Tenders during yesterday's auction reached P8.5 billion, but the government only accepted P740 million in bids. The government intended to raise a maximum of P3 billion from the bond issuance.

National Treasurer Mina Figueroa said during a press

briefing that the government has given notice to banks that it was poised to reject bids higher than the 11 percent it set as a threshold.

"We had an agreement with the banks that 11 percent was the acceptable rate, so if that (P740-million borrowing) was the only amount we could raise from the 11 percent, then that was what we only accepted," said Figueroa.

Meanwhile, the BTr is set to issue treasury bills on March 15 after earlier planning to temporarily postpone their auction in favor of cash management bills (CMBs) because of the perceived low appetite of the market for the regular 91-, 182- and 364-day T-bills. The government, pushed through with the issuance of CMBs last Monday.

Figueroa said she is opti-

mistic the average rate for the 91-day T-bill will reach 6.7 percent in next week's auction, despite high bids that led to the failure of earlier auctions.

"There have been a lot of developments since the last time we rejected bids," she said. "Who knows, rates may be better this time."

During the failed auction last March 1, the average rate of the offers for the 91-day T-bill reached 6.981. Had the BTr accepted the bids for the 182 and 364 debt papers, their averages could have risen to 8.715 percent and 9.869 percent, respectively.

The government last Monday issued 42-day CMBs for the first time in three years. Rate for the 42-day CMB reached 7.312 percent, and the government raised P2.06 billion during its auction.

Investors seek SC help on Wincorp

By Philip C. Tubeza

THREE investors who lost millions of pesos in the Westmont Investment Corp. (Wincorp) scam have urged the Supreme Court to overturn a Department of Justice order stopping the filing of charges against the son of former Finance Secretary Edgardo Espiritu and nine other Wincorp officials.

In a five-page petition for certiorari and mandamus, investors Juan Yu, Cherry Ann Yu, and Mary Yu, through their lawyer Romeo Esmero, asked the tribunal to nullify Acting Justice Secretary Ma. Mercedes Gutierrez's Feb. 23 order that stopped the Manila Prosecutors Office from filing syndicated estafa charges against the 10 Wincorp officials.

"(Gutierrez's order) ... could set a very dangerous precedent, and would breed injustice and corruption in the administration of justice," Esmero warned.

Gutierrez ordered Manila City Prosecutor Ramon Garcia to defer the filing of

charges after the Wincorp officials filed a motion for reconsideration before her office.

Esmero said Gutierrez's order could render her liable under the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act for "manifest partiality in the performance of official duties."

He said that if the justice secretary's decision were upheld, "then all the accused throughout the country could defer the filing of information by the simple expedient of filing a motion for reconsideration."

Besides Espiritu's son John Anthony, Wincorp's former chair, the other persons accused of estafa were Wincorp president Antonio T. Ong, vice president Anthony P. Reyes, corporate secretary Nemesio R. Briones, director Mariza Santos-Tan, assistant corporate secretary Francis E. Orena, and directors Manuel Estrella, Henry T. Cua-Loping, Vicnete T. Cua, and Simeon S. Cua.

The Wincorp scam allegedly defrauded a thousand investors of around P7 billion.

Probe urged on Meralco collections

By Abigail L. Ho

THE CONSUMER group People Opposed to Warrantless Electricity Rates (POWER) has urged the Energy Regulatory Commission to look into the alleged illegal collections of a 12-centavo rate hike which the Manila Electric Co. supposedly made in December 2003.

The power rate hike was scheduled to take effect only in January 2004.

Lolita Donato, Power convenor, said that when the Lopez firm implemented the new rate, it was able to collect around P200 million for the December consumption alone.

The ERC on Nov. 27 allowed Meralco to increase its rate by 12 centavos per kilowatt-hour (kWh). But in a clarificatory order issued Jan. 12, the regulatory body said that the additional charge could only be applied on electricity used beginning January this year.

Despite the order, Donato said Meralco still collected the adjusted rate from around four million households.

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Speaker

Francisco del Rosario is chairman of the 2004 Management Association of the Philippines Annual CEO Conference. He was chairman as well in 2003.

MBA from Columbia University in New York, 12 years with New York & Florida office of IBM Corp. 9 years with The Data Company in California. Philippine Executive Forum & Japan Certified Data Company Instructor, Florida, U.S.A.

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Chinabank shuffle

IN yet another indication that something is brewing in the Chinabank boardroom, taipan Henry Sy Sr. has just shuffled 310,000 Chinabank shares previously indirectly held, apparently through broker(s), and folded them directly under the family's Sysmart Corp.

The taipan's action comes two months before the bank's annual stockholders' meeting, with the conservative bank's balance of power having been upset by the surprise sale of the Taiwanese bank ICBC's swing bloc to two unknown offshore companies.

ICBC had earlier signed an agreement to sell its 8.079-percent bloc to Ambassador Alfonso Yuchengco but, at the last hour, disposed of the same bloc to two unknown offshore companies.

The mystery sale, incidentally, had been facilitated by stockbroker Eddie Gobing, a known Sy ally.

The aborted sale, in turn, prompted Yuchengco to sue ICBC and the mystery buyers.

In addition to strengthening its shareholder stake, Sysmart disclosed that it had acquired 3,980 more shares of China Banking Corp. last month, although the Sy patriarch, in a parallel disclosure, revealed that he had accumulated one share shy, or only 3,979 shares.

That single, unaccounted share could most probably be assigned to someone else, an outsider who would most likely be nominated by the taipan to represent him and his family come the May 6 stockholders' meeting.

Thanks to the taipan's unrelenting, bit-by-bit purchase strategy, Sy's combined shareholdings in the Dee-Yuchengco bank had grown to 9,248,213 as of end-February, from 9,240,634 shares as of end-2003. Of the February total, Sy says 6,662,315 shares are being held "indirectly."

With that admission, the mall king now places his shareholdings at about 30.369 percent of the bank, nosing out the bank's founding family, the Dees, and their in-laws, the Yuchengcos.

Per Chinabank's own calculations at last year's stockholders' meeting, the Dees held 9.55 percent while the combined Yuchengco-RCBC-AY companies controlled another 19.826 percent. That same accounting, incidentally, already placed last year the combined Sy shareholdings at 38.4 percent, excluding the rumored ICBC stake.

Meanwhile, Chinabank spokesperson Alex Escucha clarified that the 11 out of the 16 shares under the name of director Yvonne Yuchengco that were reported sold by the ambassador's daughter in November had actually just been transferred to the Yuchengco's Malayan Group.

Yvonne apparently holds only qualifying shares in Chinabank and those nominal shares, having borne dividends, were then returned by the dutiful daughter to the parent holding company.

Out of bounds

IMAGINE the Subic Bay Yacht Club founder/commodore being stripped of membership for non-payment of dues at the neighboring Subic Bay Golf and Country Club.

Victor "VicVic" Villavicencio leads 50 mem-

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

bers of the Subic golf club whose shares may be auctioned off if the Villavicencio group fails to settle its unpaid dues by March 15.

The Taiwanese developer of the golf and country club had already taken out a newspaper ad last Sunday to warn the group of the planned auction.

In defense, Villavicencio claims he and fellow members like GRO king Jolly Ting, Johnson Go, Alice Sotto, Benito Soliven, Carol Teodoro, investment banker Vicente Atilano, and William Cheng have been withholding payment in protest over the developer's failure to build the clubhouse and other promised facilities.

Digital divide

DIGITEL clarified that it has decided not to retain any Washington, D.C.-based antitrust law firm, as reported here on Monday, until after the grand jury hearings in Honolulu.

In the meantime, what the Gokong-wei-telecom firm hired was a Honolulu-based lawyer, Hawaii's former Attorney General Marjorie Brawnster, to advise Digitel executive Perla Ignacio for the duration of

the hearings.

Ignacio is so far the lone Digitel executive who has appeared at the grand jury hearings in connection with the antitrust complaint filed by the American telecom giants against the Philippine telephone companies.

Heard through the grapevine

ABS-CBN boss Gabby Lopez has assigned a helicopter to whisk blind Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli from Metro Manila's gridlock during his one-day concert at the Araneta Coliseum next month.

Lopez decided to make ABS-CBN a major sponsor of the rare, world-class concert to deflect criticisms that his network has worsened "bobocracy" in the country with inane noon-time shows.

(Email: cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

MRT-7 group to seek . . .

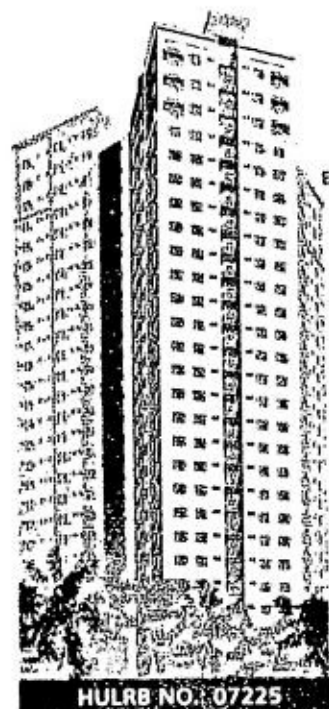
From page B1

Marilao, passing through the La Mesa Dam reservoir, Fairview, Batasan, University of the Philippines in Diliman, Philcoa and Edsa-Quezon Avenue.

De Ocampo said the group was not asking for a government

guarantee but the project's terms of reference required some sort of subsidy from the government.

MRT-7 envisions itself not just a railway but an intermodal transport system. De Ocampo said the plan was to integrate the regular road transport with the railway.

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B4

Sale of 40% PSE stake opposed

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

A GROUP of stockbrokers is threatening to "go to court" to stop the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) from completing the sale of its shares through private placement.

In a letter addressed to PSE officials led by its chair Alicia Rita Arroyo and president Cayetano Paderanga Jr., stockbrokers Ismael Cruz, Filomeno Francisco and Edgardo Guevara said they were opposed to the sale of a 40-percent stake of the PSE to private institutions for a number of reasons. The stake consists of unissued shares.

The sale of primary and secondary shares to the Government Service and Insurance System (GSIS), PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund, San Miguel Retirement

Fund, Kim Eng Investment Ltd., KE Strategic Pte. Ltd., A. Soriano Corp. and Equinox Partners will raise P733 million.

Cruz told the INQUIRER that a manifesto opposing the deal was signed by about 80 stockholders. In the manifesto, they said that the private placement was "consummated in undue haste" and lacked transparency.

They also said that the transaction price of P119.50 per share "was extremely low and grossly disadvantageous to PSE stockholders."

Stockholders added that at the time the transaction was announced, the price of PSE shares ranged from P195 to P200 per share. Further, the transaction price represented a "small premium" over the PSE's book value of P105 per share.

They claimed that the transac-

tion was "anomalous" after the PSE declared a cash payout of P16 per share out of accumulated earnings after the subscription to the new shares which will also benefit the private investors as incoming stockholders.

The deal also allegedly violated the preemptive rights of existing stockholders recognized under the Corporation Code, the 5 percent ownership cap in the PSE held by a single investor and breached listing rules against the issuance of additional shares within six months from listing. The PSE was listed last Dec. 15.

They also balked at a possible conflict of interest on the part of investment house ATR Kim Eng Capital Partners Inc. who acted as financial advisor to the deal.

"ATR Kim Eng is in a conflict of

interest situation acting as financial adviser, underwriter and buyer not only benefiting from the low purchase price but also by the quick cash dividend declaration of P16 per share," stockbrokers wrote.

They also said that the sale was not yet approved by two-thirds of the stockholders which would be needed as it involved more than 15 percent of the assets of the PSE.

Stockbrokers asked to be represented in a board meeting today by Cruz and Francisco.

"They will use the 40-percent bloc to vote during the annual stockholder's meeting on Saturday. We are not against inviting new investors to the exchange specially of their caliber but the way it was done with undue haste and poor timing, these are the issues that need to be addressed," Cruz told the INQUIRER.

DLSU-GBA program debuts in Indonesia

THE DE La Salle University Professional Schools Inc.-Graduate School of Business recently inked an agreement with the Maranatha Christian University in Bandung, Indonesia, that sought to establish an academic cooperation between the two institutions.

Executive vice president Francisco F. del Rosario signed on behalf of DLSU PSI-GBS, while Ibrahim Surya, vice rector for finance and administration, signed for MCU.

Through the agreement, DLSU PSI-GBS sent its MBA faculty members and administrators to MCU to teach courses in MCU's MBA program.

"Our partnership with MCU is just an initial step in introducing DLSU PSI-GBS's world-class curriculum to the Asian region," said Dean Philip E. Juico.

"It is also our way of creating socially responsible businessmen among young professionals so they can help propel our region toward development and progress," he added.

Finance nearing deal on \$220-M loan for MWSS

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance is nearing the finalization of a \$220-million loan from BNP Paribas for the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System.

MWSS chief finance officer Estrellito Poloso said in an interview yesterday that the finance department and the Paris-based bank were now determining the benchmark rates that would be slapped on the seven-year loan.

MWSS Deputy Administrator Macra Cruz said BNP Paribas' offer was chosen out of the 28 submitted by accredited foreign and local banks/financial institutions.

The others that submitted offers included JP Morgan Chase, Citibank N.A. and Deutsche Bank.

Cruz said MWSS' recommendation would

still be further evaluated by the Monetary Board of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, that monitors the Philippine government's borrowings.

The MWSS will again ask the national government, through the Department of Finance, to guarantee the borrowings.

The planned borrowing will be used to finance the unpaid obligations of water concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc. and to put up new water sources.

The MWSS last year borrowed close to P10 billion to pay for the unpaid obligations of Maynilad.

Financially-ailing Maynilad had stopped paying concession fee to MWSS since March 2001 due to serious cash flow problems.

Aside from paying off another set of maturing obligations, MWSS will also use the loans to finance the technical component and initial construction works of new water sources.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 9, 2004)					
STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bank of the Phil. Islands	45.5	45.5	44.5	45	238,200
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	38	38.5	38	38.5	5,159,500
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.57	0.58	3,200,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	25	25.5	24.75	25	143,000
Philippine National Bank	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	14,500
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27	27	27	12,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	26	26	26	26	2,700
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	170	180	170	180	630
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	157	158	157	157	210
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1500	1505	1500	1505	1,870
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	22.75	22.75	22.75	22.75	6,900
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.65	0.65	3,590,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	865	870	860	870	28,130
Island Info And Tech Inc.	0.042	0.044	0.04	0.044	8,300,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.037	0.037	0.037	0.037	200,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	7,000
Philippine Tel. Corp.	1.6	1.62	1.56	1.6	7,034,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	935	940	925	940	313,990
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	41,700,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	21,500
Manila Electric Co. B	31.5	32	31.5	31.5	143,200
Petrone Corp.	3.1	3.1	3	3	3,330,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.1	3.1	3.05	3.05	57,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	100,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	300,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	100,000
Union Cement Corp.	1.4	1.44	1.4	1.4	843,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	44,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	29.5	29.5	29.5	29.5	300
Jollibee Foods Corp.	18.5	18.5	18.25	18.25	206,800
RFM Corp.	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.63	50,000
San Miguel Corp. A	56.5	56.5	56	56	105,700
San Miguel Corp. B	68.5	68.5	68.5	68.5	35,100
Universal Robina Corp.	5.6	5.7	5.6	5.7	84,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	500,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	6	6	5.9	6	3,030,000
Aboliz Equity Ventures	3	3	3	3	12,000
Alo Net Holdings Inc.	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	2,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	40,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	9.3	9.4	9.2	9.2	11,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.57	0.57	6,230,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.034	0.034	0.034	0.034	300,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1	1	1	1	490,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	23.5	23.75	23.5	23.75	141,400
Ionics Inc.	1.38	1.38	1.38	1.38	50,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.86	1.86	1.84	1.84	610,000
Macro Asia Corp.	0.45	0.47	0.45	0.47	80,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	1,195,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	670,000
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.22	1.22	1.18	1.18	30,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.93	0.93	600,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	420,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Matsushita Elec Phil Corp.	7.8	8	7.8	8	74,000
Manubay Vinyl Corp.	1.16	1.16	1.02	1.14	1,310,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	20,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	100,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	22.75	22.75	22.75	22.75	223,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	3,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	400
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	3,076,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	100,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.14	0.14	0.13	0.13	1,000,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.205	0.21	0.205	0.21	5,330,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.06	500,000
Fit-Estate Land Inc.	1.08	1.18	1.08	1.18	10,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	2	2	2	2	100,000
SM Development Corp.	1.08	1.1	1.08	1.08	218,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.7	16,210,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	202,000,000
Lapanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	750,000
Lapanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.26	270,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.006	2,000,000
Orinco Corp.	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	0.0028	5,000,000
Philrex Mining Corp. A	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	190,000
Philrex Mining Corp. B	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	10,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	3,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	20,000,000

BSP tightens rules...

From page B1

that each bank's dosri exposure should not exceed 15 percent of its total loan portfolio or 100 percent of its networth, whichever is lower, provided that the dosri lending would not exceed 30 percent of the aggregate ceiling or outstanding loans and other credit accommodations and guarantees, whichever is lower.

"Finally, banks will now have more resources available for non-related borrowers. All of these will definitely have a profound impact on the financial system,"

Buenaventura said.

Among the sanctions mapped out by the BSP in cases of violation are: restriction or prohibition on the bank from declaring dividends until the outstanding loans and other credit accommodations had been reduced within the prescribed ceilings, and the office of any bank director or officer who violates the provisions of the circular may be declared vacant after due notice to the board of directors and the director or officer concerned shall be subject to the penal provisions of the New Central Bank Act.

DISCLOSURES

ELECTED members of **SM Development Corp.**'s nomination committee were Henry Sy Sr., Ricardo Romulo and Henry Sy Jr. The audit committee members are Hans Sy, Octavio Espiritu, Rogelio Cabunag and Jose Sio. Sy Jr., Cabunag, Andres Gatmaitan and Antonio Henson are members of the compensation and remuneration committee

CEBU Property Ventures and Development Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 23, 3 p.m. at the Sinulog Ballroom of City Sports Club Cebu. Stockholders of record as of Feb. 24 are entitled to notice of and vote at the meeting.

CEBU Holdings Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 23, 10 a.m. at the Sinulog Ballroom of City Sports Club Cebu. Stockholders of record as of March 1 are entitled to notice of and vote at the meeting.

MACROASIA Corp. disclosed the new positions of the following officers: Marivic Moya, vice president for human resources, legal and external relations and corporate information officer; Reynaldo Munsayac, VP for finance and administration; Christopher Lu, VP for marketing and facilities management, and Amador Sendin, VP for planning and business development.

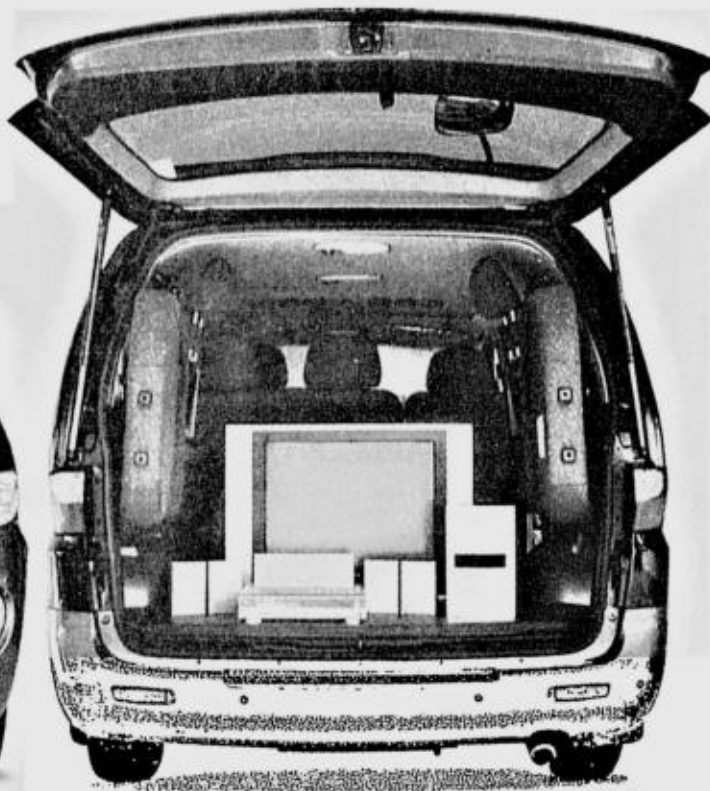
WEN-Chi Wu resigned as treasurer and executive committee member of Philippine Seven Corp. Tsung-Yu Lin is the new treasurer of the company.

Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

March 9, 2004	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.805997	1.000000	56.2920
Japan	Yen	0.007252	0.008998	0.5065
United Kingdom	Pound	1.490933	1.849800	104.1289
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.103466	0.128370	7.2262
Switzerland	Franc	0.632601	0.784868	44.1818
Canada	Dollar	0.610604	0.757576	42.6455
Singapore	Dollar	0.472725	0.586510	33.0158
Australia	Dollar	0.609081	0.755687	42.5391
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.138036	2.652661	149.3236
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.214938	0.266674	15.0116
Brunei	Dollar	0.471343	0.584795	32.9193
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000094	0.000117	0.0066
Bahia	Baht	0.020462	0.025387	1.4291
UAE	Dirham	0.219450	0.272272	15.3267
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.240700	69.8415
Argentina	Peso	0.274616	0.340716	19.1796
Brazil	Real	0.280249	0.347705	19.5730
Denmark	Kroner	0.134186	0.166484	9.3717
India	Rupee	0.017836	0.022129	1.2457
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.212133	0.263193	14.8157
Mexico	New Peso	0.073546	0.091249	5.1366
New Zealand	Dollar	0.543308	0.674082	37.9454
Norway	Kroner	0.115503	0.143305	8.0669
Pakistan	Rupee	0.014115	0.017513	0.9858
South Africa	Rand	0.122800	0.152358	8.5765
Korea	Won	0.000687	0.000852	0.0480
Sweden	Kroner	0.109303	0.135612	7.6339
Syria	Pound	0.015626	0.019387	1.0913
Taiwan	NT Dollar	0.024240	0.030075	1.6930
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000421	0.000522	0.0294

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PSE presses oil firms to list shares

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

THE PHILIPPINE Stock Exchange (PSE) is convincing oil firms to offer their shares to the public.

PSE president Cayetano Paderanga Jr. said, however, that the PSE has not received word from Caltex Philippines Inc. nor Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. on a possible public offering.

The two oil refiners are required under the downstream oil industry deregulation law to offer shares to the public.

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) was informed of the possibility that Caltex may not pursue a public offering since it has converted its refinery into an import terminal.

Caltex and Shell were supposed to go public as early as February 2001, but the provision could not be enforced after the justice department ruled that the deadline was "only directory and not executory."

The two oil firms were not too keen on an IPO two years ago with the slump in the stock market.

An IPO or "going public," refers to the first sale of stock by a private company to the public.

It is one way of raising capital to expand business.

Caltex earlier poured in P750 million to convert its Batangas refinery into an import terminal for finished petroleum products.

Caltex country chair Timothy Leveille last year said that the refinery "had reached the end of its useful economic life" amid the rise of bigger and more modern refineries in the region.

Leveille said the conversion of the refinery did not mean a step back for the company as the new import terminal—which would be operational by December—would transform the complex into a regional supply and distribution hub.

The converted terminal has a storage capacity of 2.7 million barrels or more than half of Caltex's total storage capacity of 4 million barrels in the country.

Caltex had no choice but to stop the refinery's operations as the capacity of the 49-year-old facility was too small at 72,000 barrels per day (bpd).

Batangas sugar farmers seek reopening of sugar central

By Christine A. Gaylican

SOME 14,000 sugar farmers from Western Batangas have asked the Department of Agriculture and the Sugar Regulatory Authority to re-open the Balayan Sugar Central Inc. (BSCI)—one of the largest in Luzon.

"The SRA and the DA should help us re-open the BSCI because it is disrupting milling and production activities in the province," said farmer-leader Norberto Holgado in Filipino.

The BSCI closed down in December last

year due to labor problems.

The BSCI mills around 30 percent of the sugar produced by Batangas.

The farmers wanted to bring some 500,000 metric tons of sugarcane to the Central Azucarera de Pedro (CADP) in Nasugbu, but it could not accommodate the volume.

"The CADP said it could not accommodate our harvest until they have fully milled the harvest of their own registered planters and

farmers," Holgado said.

"This means that our harvest cannot be milled before May," he added.

He warned that without an alternative, BSCI's closure could spell the loss of 500,000 MT of sugarcane.

The farmers have also asked the government to allow the farmers and cooperatives to defer payment of production loans they secured from the Land Bank of the Philippines.

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DEALERS WELCOME

Japanese firm opens new plant in Subic

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT ZONE—A Japanese firm engaged in the import, export and refurbishing of CT scanners and other imaging machines has infused \$65,000 (P3.74 million) worth of investments here.

Japan Medical Imaging (JMI) Inc. has entered into a sub-lease agreement with the Boton Light and Science Park and set up its plant inside the Brand Rex Compound.

JMI is an international distributor of used, pre-owned, reconditioned and refurbished diagnostic ultrasound and CT scan systems, transducers and other medical imaging equipment and accessories.

Woon Yong Jeong, JMI vice president, said the opening of the factory here was part of the company's expansion of its sales territory.

"It was a year ago when we thought and planned to establish our Subic factory. We would intensify our efforts to make this venture

successful," Jeong said during the plant's inauguration last week.

Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority Chair Felicito Payumo said JMI's operation requires technical skills.

"SBMA has the required manpower with highly specialized skills and infrastructure to support the company in the manufacturing and delivery of its products," Payumo said.

He said the company has the experience needed to engage in refurbishing medical equipment for hospitals' radiology departments.

Hidenori Mukai, JMI president, said the company would initially hire 10 skilled local workers.

JMI is also engaged in the installation, inspection, repair and servicing of medical equipment. Allan Macatuno, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Kephilco remains keen on coal plant project

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—The Korean firm planning to construct a 100-megawatt coal-fired plant here is not giving up on the project despite the plan's rejection by the Iloilo provincial board.

Hyang Reol Lyu, general manager of the project management group of the Korean Electric Power Company Philippines Corp. (Kephilco), however, said the group will put the project on hold until after the May 10 elections "because we don't want it to be used for political purposes."

Voting 7-5 with one abstention, the 14-member board rejected the proposed \$150-million project on grounds that Kephilco failed to consult stakeholders and that the project would harm the protected areas near the 25-hectare site in San Salvador Village in Banate town, 54 km north

of Iloilo City.

Lyu said Kephilco was hoping that the project would get a "favorable" position from the board that will be elected in May, although the firm would abide by any decision.

Lyu said the coal-fired power plant was "one of the best choices in Panay Island to address looming power shortage."

He said similar plants built in other countries were proven to be safe and complied with environmental laws and standards.

Groups that protested against the project welcomed the board's decision.

"The God of History will judge you by your decision," said Jaro Archbishop Angel Lagdameo, who along with 28 priests of the archdiocese had led a prayer rally attended by around 1,000 Banate residents and members of environmental and militant groups at the grounds of the provincial capitol.

GOINGS ON

Thrift banks' convention

THE CHAMBER of Thrift Banks (CTB) will hold its national convention on March 11, 2004 at the Dusit Hotel Nikko in Makati, in celebration of Thrift Banking Week from March 7 to 13.

The CTB is the umbrella organization of the country's 92 thrift banks whose 1,172 branches are spread all over the country.

With the theme "Promoting an Enabling Environment for Thrift Banks," the convention will have key officials from both the government and private sectors as speakers and presenters to the event.

A forum with the "presidentiables" will highlight the convention.

New CebuPac VP

CAPTAIN Victor Custodio was recently appointed flight operations vice president of the Gokongwei-owned Cebu Pacific Air.

A cum laude graduate of the Philippine Military Academy, 45-year-old Custodio served as a Philippine Air Force pilot for 13 years before joining the airline in 1996. After graduating top of his class in 1985 from the PAF flying School, he was assigned all over the country as a combat helicopter pilot where he was awarded 14 medals and 17 commendations.

Custodio became the pilot and aide-de-camp of former Presidents Corason C. Aquino and Fidel V. Ramos

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EU finance chiefs mull ECB, IMF posts

BRUSSELS—The EU Monday put off its choice to fill a hole on the European Central Bank's decision-making board, a decision that now risks getting caught up in debate on who should lead the IMF.

Finance ministers from the 12-nation eurozone postponed deciding on a replacement for Spain's Eugenio Domingo Solans on the ECB executive board until a summit of EU leaders later this month.

Irish Finance Minister Charlie McCreevy, whose country holds the EU presidency, said his colleagues would meet on March 25 to decide whose name to submit to the heads of government the following day.

Three candidates are in the running to replace Domingo

Solans, who is due to step down at the end of May from the ECB's six-strong executive board, which is responsible for the day-to-day running of the eurozone's monetary policy.

They are Belgian National Bank director Peter Praet, Bank of Spain board member Jose Manuel Gonzalez-Paramo, and Ireland's Michael Tutty, a vice president of the European Investment Bank.

The choice of the new ECB executive board member risks getting complicated by the debate about who should lead the International Monetary Fund after Germany's Horst Koehler last week resigned as IMF managing director.

By tradition, the top post at the IMF goes to a European. AFP

US election-year politics pose high hurdle for trade agreements

WASHINGTON—In his first three years in office, President George W. Bush fulfilled a major commitment to business community allies by pushing free trade bills through Congress. But extending that streak into this election year may not be in the cards.

As Democrats put an election-year focus on the deals as culprits in the loss of US jobs—and a small but crucial number of Republicans try to protect sugar and textile producers—recently negotiated trade accords with Central America, Australia and Morocco stand almost no chance of being ratified this year.

Success on any of them would follow passage of the Jordan free trade agreement in 2001, a hard-fought victory in 2002 giving Bush "fast track" authority to negotiate trade deals without congressional interference and passage of free trade accords with Chile and Singapore last year.

Republican Rep. Kevin Brady, the administration's point man on the Central American Free Trade Agreement, said it was "embarrassingly good" for the United States.

More than 80 percent of consumer and industrial goods exports to Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua would become duty-free immediately, with the remaining tariffs phased out over 10 years, according to the office of the US Trade Representative.

More than half of current farm exports to the region would become duty-free immediately, and the rest over 15 years.

Brady conceded "it's going to be a challenge" to win approval this year, "for reasons unrelated to the agreement itself."

One reason is that many Democrats see free trade deals, particularly the 1993 North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico and Canada, as causing the loss of American

manufacturing jobs.

Rep. Sander Levin, a Democratic leader on trade issues, said his party was united in its concerns about the failure of the pending Central American pact to include "core labor standards," such as rights to bargain collectively and prohibitions on child labor.

"Cafta is destined to become the lightning rod for debate over international trade policy," Levin said. Unless it is changed before coming to a vote, "it will be defeated in Congress," he predicted.

Australia could be an easier sell because it is just one country and has labor and income standards similar to the United States.

Manufactured goods account for 93 percent of US exports to Australia, and the pact would immediately end duties on almost all those goods. AP

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A FARMER prepares vegetables for a delivery leaving the outskirts of Shanghai, China, having opened its annual parliament session with vows to help the impoverished countryside, will now turn its attention to creating jobs and reforming the ailing banking system. Premier Wen Jiabao vowed to cool off the economy and help hundreds of millions of farmers who are angry at stagnant living standards, corruption, and lack of basic services. REUTERS

No deal yet between Argentina, IMF

BUENOS AIRES/WASHINGTON—Argentina and the IMF made progress on Monday in last-ditch talks to avoid a new debt default, sources close to the talks said, but they remained deadlocked on two main issues.

With the clock ticking toward a \$3.1-billion debt deadline that Argentina faces with the International Monetary Fund on Tuesday, the two sides were discussing steps the lender wants Argentina to take to keep a loan deal on track, sources said.

An Economy Ministry spokesman said Argentina had received a letter from the fund and the government was studying it.

Sources close to the talks said the two sides remained stuck on IMF demands that Argentina rubber-stamp its choice of banks to restructure its \$88 billion of defaulted debt and raise the bar on how many creditors must accept its debt offer to deem it a success.

"There was some progress," one source close to the talks told Reuters on condition of anonymity, referring to a meeting between

Economy Minister Roberto Lavagna and IMF official John Dodsworth in Buenos Aires on Monday. "Work is ongoing."

Argentina is refusing to delve into around \$15 billion in international reserves to repay \$3.1 billion due to the IMF on Tuesday, saying the fund must first promise it will effectively reimburse it.

Argentine Central Bank president Alfonso Prat Gay was seeking to drum up support from peers among the Group of Seven rich nations—the IMF's main shareholders—at a meeting of central bank heads in the Swiss city of Basel, a bank source said.

Opting to default—as Argentina did briefly on a similar payment to the fund in September—would cut off one of Argentina's last avenues to financial assistance and further isolate it from world markets.

Argentina, the IMF's third-largest debtor after Brazil and Turkey, currently owes around \$7.47 billion to the World Bank, around \$8 billion to the IADB and about \$15 billion to the IMF. Reuters

Mitsubishi sells Proton stake

TOKYO—Ailing auto maker Mitsubishi Motors Corp. said on Tuesday it had sold its 7.93-percent stake in Malaysian carmaker Proton for \$99 million—the Japanese firm's latest move in a furious scramble for funds.

The sale by one of its founding companies also increases the likelihood that Proton, or Perusahaan Otomobil Nasional Bhd by its full name, will tie up with another foreign partner or even be bought out.

Mitsubishi, Japan's fourth-largest auto maker, said it sold its stake for 11 billion yen (\$98.89 million), reaping an eight billion yen profit. The shares were sold to investors at a 5.2-percent discount to Monday's closing price, bankers in Malaysia said on Monday.

Battered by loan control woes at its North American finance unit, Mitsubishi has also sold some of its holdings in its truck affiliate to the Japanese car firm's main shareholder, DaimlerChrysler AG.

Mitsubishi is also expected to tap the German-US auto giant and other big shareholders for a large-scale bailout soon.

Proton, Malaysia's biggest carmaker, was established by the Heavy Industries Corporation of Malaysia, Mitsubishi Motors and trading house Mitsubishi Corp. 20 years ago as the centerpiece of former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's efforts to create a national car industry.

But while Proton cars account for around half the cars on the road in Malaysia, the company is battling falling sales amid price competition from Korean and Japanese auto makers. It reported a surprise quarterly loss last

month as sales of foreign vehicles outpaced its aging lineup.

Analysts say the company is ripe for a buy-out by a global auto maker looking for a ready-made foothold in South East Asia.

"Proton has a pretty drab, plain vanilla brand identity, but in its favor it has state-of-the-art plants and equipment and a trained workforce," said Michael Dunne, head of research firm Automotive Resources Asia.

"I can see something happening like General Motors did with Daewoo in Korea, keeping the name but making it essentially a GM company," he said.

Mitsubishi Motors said technical cooperation would continue.

"Although today's decision marks the end of the capital alliance, MMC will continue to cooperate with Proton through transferring technology and supplying parts and components as a responsive supplier and partner," Mitsubishi said in a statement.

Mitsubishi said the sale had already been factored into its earnings outlook for the current business year.

Creating a big headache for DaimlerChrysler, which owns 37 percent of the Japanese auto maker, Mitsubishi recently jacked up its net loss forecast for the year to March 31 to 72 billion yen from 11 billion yen.

Mitsubishi Corp. continues to hold a 7.93-percent stake in Proton. Although there has been speculation it would also sell its stake, Japan's largest general trading house said nothing had been decided. Reuters

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PEOPLE *at* WORK

TOYM awardee advises youth on how to compete in globalization

By Candy G. Villanueva

WHEN the award-winning movie Jose Rizal was made, hundreds of unsung heroes toiled behind the scenes. They would wait patiently for almost a day for a seven-minute spot that would pay them P300.

Butch Jimenez underwent the same experience himself. "I kinda knew what the stars went through but I really wanted to know what the extras went through. I think it's important to know what everybody goes through," explained the The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) Foundation president. Jimenez went on to say that to be successful in any endeavor, one has to know the ins and outs of the business, including the roles of the small players.

Jimenez, 1998 TOYM awardee for Communication Arts, gave this piece of advice to enthusiastic students at the TOYM Youth Forum last February at the Music Museum in Greenhills. The forum was part of the week-long celebration of TOYM excellence. The student leaders were treated to a full day of enlightenment from TOYM awardees who shared their secrets to success.

Global competitiveness

"You and I are no longer going to compete with ourselves. We are going to start competing with the best of the world," challenged Jimenez. In his speech "Leadership Excellence," Jimenez explained that the world is moving towards globalization. Therefore, the difficulty of making it in the real world would be a notch higher than it was before for

ALL ABOUT WORK



everyone. He imparted this wisdom hoping to prepare the young hopefuls to succeed in a highly competitive and challenging environment.

Jimenez's philosophy in life is to compete with the best, based on the lessons he learned from school. One of these lessons is the Pareto Principle.

An Italian economist who studied the distribution of wealth in several countries in the 1900s discovered a common phenomenon. His study revealed that "about 80 percent of the wealth in most countries was controlled by a consistent minority—about 20 percent of the people." Vilfredo Pareto called this observation "predictable imbalance" which later became the 80:20 rule.

80:20 rule

The rule implies that in any group or organization, 20 percent of input or efforts lead to 80 percent of results. Inversely, it means that 80 percent of output is driven only by 20 percent of the group.

Jimenez discovered that this reality is true in business and everyday life. He gave as example an ordinary closet. He says that if we look at our closets, we would notice that we only wear 20 percent of our clothes 80 percent of the time. Rarely does anyone wear a single

article of clothing proportionately. For some reason, we have our favorite set of clothes which we wear 80 percent of the time.

Moving to a broader example, he stated that SMART Communications earns millions every year and that 80 percent of those millions are generated by only 20 percent of its products. Similarly, a majority of company earnings are only generated by 20 percent of its employees.

What is the significance of this discovery to the individual? Jimenez elucidates, "If you are part of a business or cause, you have to be in that 20 that drives the 80. The moment you get out of school and enter the workforce, when you start competing with everybody else you have to ask yourself, where am I? Am I in the 20 (percent) that drive the 80? Or am I in the 80 that drive only the 20?" He pointed out that those in the 20 percent have more chances at promotions and success. "That is where everything happens and that is where the answers lie."

Top of mind

Taking a cue from marketing management principles, Jimenez points out that "It's about where you position your product in the minds of your clients. You got to try to be the first in their minds," explained the TOYM president.

Products on the top of the list are usually industry leaders. "Industry leaders are difficult to dislodge from the highest spot," said Jimenez. "In the business world, in the work environment, it is important as well that you recognize yourself as a



BUTCH Jimenez

LOUIE L. LOPEZ/CONTRIBUTOR

product. You have to work it out so that as the product, you become top in the minds of your bosses."

Test of integrity

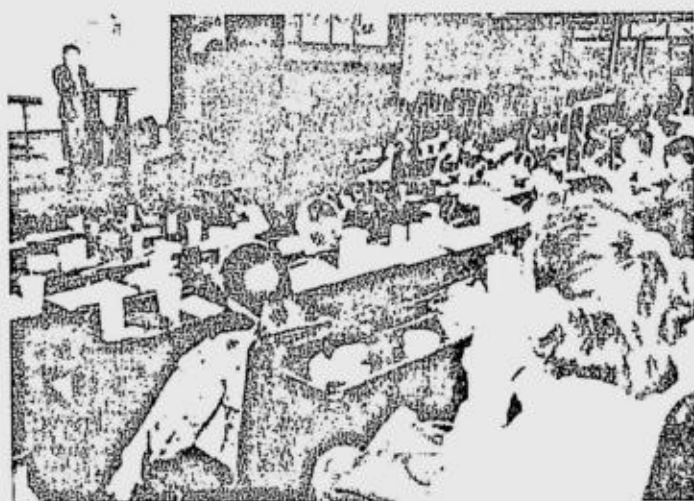
Another lesson Jimenez imparted to the students was about the story of a Vanderbilt Math professor who gave two tests in his exams. Every single time he would give a test, while passing out the papers, he would always say "Class, I am giving you a test in trigonometry but in reality, I am giving you two tests. One in trigonometry and one in honesty. If you can pass both, that would be ideal but if you can pass only one, I prefer you pass the test of honesty."

According to Jimenez, if you fail the test of integrity, you will fail in the real world as well. He stressed that people look for the disciplined worker, the hard worker and the person with integrity. "That's why school is important. It is not from

where you earn good grades, it is where you are able to develop values."

He also believes that people seek humor, confidence and a positive attitude over brains, connections and experience in the workplace. To stand out, he asserted that values should be developed more than skills and high grades.

Jimenez stressed that to be in the 20 percent who drives the 80 percent and to be on the top of mind, one has to focus on values. And these values should be developed now. He urged the students to action, "It is important that you build all of this now. Because if you have a head start, you will be the person who will execute things. You will be the one who will make things happen. You will be the person that people look for. There absolutely would be no reason for you to fail. You will be able to compete with the best in the world."



JIMENEZ urges students to make things happen. LOUIE L. LOPEZ/CONTRIBUTOR

Break routine for career success

By Jason Michael Gracia

AN EPIDEMIC is occurring all around you, and there is a good chance it has already found its way into your life. It begins slowly at first, nearly imperceptible. But it grows. In time it can take over your entire life. I have seen it happen too many times, and if you don't act now, it may happen to you.

Easy trap

It's easy to fall into the trap. Well-intentioned individuals of all ages don't mean for it to happen, but that doesn't matter. It takes much more than good intentions to steer clear of this problem. If all it took was good intentions, the world would be packed with people living their dreams and accomplishing their goals. But that's not how it works, and this trap is one of the most common reasons why it has happened too often in the past, and will continue to happen in the future.

What exactly are we dealing with here? What is so deadly to the goals and hopes you have stored away in your head?

Routine.

A very unusual experiment was conducted by John Fabre, the French naturalist, consisting

of processionary caterpillars, a type of caterpillar that blindly follows the one in front of it. This explains the name processionary caterpillar. The experiment consisted of several of these caterpillars, a flowerpot filled to the rim with dirt, and pine needles.

Lessons from caterpillars

The caterpillars formed a complete circle around the rim of the flowerpot, with the first one touching the back of the last one. The pine needles, the food of the processionary caterpillar, were placed in the center of the circle.

The caterpillars began their procession around the flowerpot, one following the other in a circle. This went on hour after hour, day after day, for an entire week. In the end, every one of the caterpillars dropped dead of starvation.

The one thing that could have saved them was only six inches away, but without purposeful thought or action, the caterpillars continued with a habitual routine that eventually proved too much to endure.

This is happening to people you know, maybe even you, although not to this degree. Get stuck doing the same old thing



ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

every single day and your goals, sitting only inches away, are as good as gone.

Break pattern

Plain and simple. You might think it's a little too simple, but falling into a routine can destroy your life. I have very strong beliefs about this because I have seen it happen to people close to

me, as I'm sure you have as well. Good friends and family start off with bright hopes for the future, but their routine begins to take their place. "No time, no time" is a common excuse. After 70 years of having no time to do the things you have always wanted to do, you'll end up with nothing but a good excuse in the end.

This is your life we are talking

about here. It's worth taking the time to break the pattern of habit and creating the changes you wish to make. There is little more that is as important as the life you create and the good you leave behind. Recognize if you are in a routine and break free.

Autopilot routine

It's not your morning routine. The routines I'm referring to are much deeper than a morning process of a shower and shave. I'm talking about turning off your brain and letting autopilot kick in. Doing the same things you did the day before with no plans to change the pattern any time soon.

You know the drill—wake up, shower, work, home, sleep, repeat. This is no way to live, and you know that. But it's still hard to break free once the routine has gotten hold of you. All hope is not lost. If you want to turn off the autopilot and start taking control of your life, it takes only one moment to make the decision. And then everything changes.

Need for change

You've heard it a thousand times, and it's a good thing, because it's true. If you keep doing

what you have always done in the past, you will keep getting the exact same results. People experience a partial insanity when it comes to routine. Perfectly logical creatures believe that doing the same thing again and again will get different results. That's crazy!

If you want to lose weight but continue with the same eating habits, you won't lose weight. If you want to have more energy but stay up until four and get up at six it won't happen. You have goals, just like everyone else. If you are stuck in a routine you won't accomplish them. Be honest with yourself about this one. It's the only way you'll realize the need for a change before you can enjoy improvement.

Break the pattern

What does it take? It takes a decision. A choice of what you really want to do with your life and the corresponding actions to make it happen. I want you to: create a plan for your future and the goals you want to accomplish. If you know where you are going and how to get there you will not be disappointed in the end.

(Reprinted with permission. Copyright by Motivation123.com.)

What does the web really mean for business?

DEAR WW: I keep hearing about how the Web is revolutionizing business. So far, all it's managed to do for us is create a small amount of sales. Where's the revolution?

E-Skeptic

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner



It's music! No, it's a distress call! England's Gloucestershire Airport was having a heck of a problem with birds on the runways, and the bird distress tape they'd purchased to scatter the troublemakers was having no effect.

Then one day, someone replaced the distress tape with ... Tina Turner! The birds cleared right out.

And that's kind of what the Internet has to be for you: "music" because it can be a fabulous sales channel as well as a great way to communicate with employees, customers and vendors; and a "dis-

stress call" because with its links, global reach, flashy graphics and split second response time, the Web has set new standards and expectations for how business should be conducted. Ask yourself the questions below to see if your business is up to date in the new Internet economy and if you're taking the lessons that it's teaching back to work. For more, check out the "Cluetrain Manifesto" (Perseus, 2000).

Is your company hyperlinked? Hyperlinks are those blue underlined words and pictures at web

sites that let you get more information with the click of a mouse. Is information that easy to get at your company? If not, what can you do to make it easier for people to get what they need?

Is your organization borderless? Clicking on a hyperlink often takes you to an entirely different web site—which is pretty different from the typical corporate culture in which people establish and protect their own turf. Can you reduce the turf boundaries in your organization so that you function as a powerful interactive team rather than as a set of feuding fiefdoms?

Do you use "rich data"? Web designers talk about "rich data": presenting information not just with words, but with still and moving images, sound and design elements that make the information both interesting and easily accessi-

ble. How "rich" is your data when you communicate at work?

Do you work on your timeframe or theirs? The web is "open" 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You may not be able to achieve that level of accessibility, but you should be striving to make your services available to customers at their convenience, not yours.

Are you a little bit broken? Tim Berners-Lee, widely credited as being the father of the Internet, says that due to its complexity, the web will always be "a little bit broken." Due to the speed and complexity of the marketplace, your company should be a little bit broken, too. Instead of striving for perfection, focus on being experimental and "getting it out." Test products, services and the market while you work on version 2.0.

Maybe you still think the Net is



ILLUSTRATION BY DIONISIO BUCCAT

for the birds, but it should help you avoid distress calls coming from your business.

(Mr. Rosner is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. E-mail him at bob@workingwounded.com.)

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OBITUARIES

"...absent with the
body to be present
with the Lord."
— 2 Corinthians 5:8

Message of Thanks

We, the family of the late

AMBASSADOR AGUSTIN MAÑILA, SR.
of Talarac and San Juan, Metro Manila

wish to express our sincerest thanks to our relatives and friends, specially to Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, who offered flowers, prayers and consoled with us during the time of our bereavement.

"Blessed is the one who fears the Lord, who greatly delights in his command" Psalm 112:1

ROMUALDO "SONNY" MENDIOLA Y SALAZAR

after 56 years of earthly journey he joined his Creator
on March 7, 2004.

His bereaved wife MARIA TERESA PAMINTUAN; children JODIE, JACIE, EVETTE and ASHLEY; brothers MIGUEL "BOY" (†) and MIGUEL "TING"; sisters MIRLA MENDIOLA-SEVERINO, M.D., LORNA MENDIOLA-ATIENZA and HERMINIA "BEE" MENDIOLA, his brother-in-law, TITO ATIENZA; grandchildren BABY JOE and ELIZABETH, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Capilla del Señor of Santuario de San Antonio, McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City.

After the 9:00 A.M. Mass on Saturday, March 13, 2004 interment will follow at the Garden of Memories, Bagong Kalsada, Pateros, Metro Manila.



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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the application of
SUZETTE MANUFACTURING & TRADING
 CORPORATION with office address at 99 Maria
 Clara Street, Bantawa, Quezon City for registration
 with the Board of Investments under Book I of the
 Omnibus Investments Code of 1987, otherwise known
 as E.O. 226, as Amended, as Existing Export
 Producer of Garments at a capacity of 1,405,223
 pieces per year with project site at the Guiguinto,
 Bulacan has been officially accepted on March 3,
 2004.

Any person with valid objections to or pertinent
 comments on the above-mentioned application may
 file his/her objection, in writing under oath, with the
 BOI within one (1) week from the date of this
 publication.

Issued this 3rd day of March 2004.

(Sgd.) FRANCISCO C. CHAVEZ

Director

Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI - March 10, 2004)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Notice is hereby given to the public that the following:



TERESITA S. JAPSON
Effective March 1, 2004



HELEN GRACE R. CAMACHO
Effective Feb. 23, 2004

Are no longer connected with **TOYOTA ALABANG, INCORPORATED**. Any transaction entered thru them for and in behalf of the company after the aforementioned date will not be honored by the company.

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that the application of **JIREH**
FORGE INC. with office address at No. 20 NHA Industrial
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GMA, Cavite City for registration with the Board of
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 Code of 1987, otherwise known as E.O. 226, as Amended,
 as New Export Producer of Home Furnitures and
 Fixtures at a capacity of 10,578 pieces per year with
 project site at the same office address stated above has
 been officially accepted on March 1, 2004.

Any person with valid objections to or pertinent
 comments on the above-mentioned application may file
 his/her objection, in writing under oath, with the BOI
 within one (1) week from the date of this publication.

Issued this 1st day of March 2004.

(Sgd.) FRANCISCO C. CHAVEZ

Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI - March 10, 2004)

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Invitation To Apply for Eligibility and To Bid

The Land Registration Authority (LRA) invites all interested Consultants to apply for eligibility and short listing and to submit sealed bids for the provision of Architectural and Engineering Design Services, for the following proposed Registry of Deeds Building projects with designated Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC), namely:

PROJECT	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) (Tax Inclusive)
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Oroquieta City/Misamis Occidental	280,000.00
Tangub City	160,000.00
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Camiguin	100,000.00
Daet, Camarines Norte	160,000.00

The required Consultancy Service includes, among others, the preparation of schematic design, structural design analysis, construction drawings, technical specifications, cost estimates and other tender documents and the provision of support services during construction. The final design per project shall be completed forty two (42) calendar days from the receipt of the Notice to Proceed (NTP).

The source of fund is covered by Special Allotment Release Order (SARO) C-03-06911 dated 29 December 2003.

Interested consultants shall be required to submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) for each project. Eligibility Forms can be secured from March 25 to April 1, 2004 at the BAC-Infrastructure Secretariat at the 5th Floor, LRA Building, East Avenue corner NIA Road, Diliman, Quezon City upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P300.00 per project.

Deadline for the submission of eligibility requirements is on April 12, 2004. After eligibility screening, the BAC shall undertake short listing and draw up a short list of a maximum of seven (7) consultants per project based on the following criteria:

- Applicable experience considering both the overall experience of the firm and individual experiences of the principal and key staff including the times when employed by other consultants;
- Qualification of personnel who may be assigned to the job vis-a-vis extent and complexity of the undertaking; and
- Current workload relative to capacity.

Bid documents shall be available for issuance to short listed consultants from April 22-29, 2004 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P500.00 per project. For purposes of evaluation, the BAC shall adopt a Quality-Cost Based Evaluation Procedure, with the technical and financial proposals given a respective weight of 85% and 15%.

Pre-bid Conference shall be held on April 30, 2004 at the LRA Conference Room. Sealed bids consisting of both the technical and financial proposals shall be received on May 12, 2004 at 10:00 o'clock a.m. at the LRA Multi-Purpose Hall during which the technical proposal shall also be opened. Financial proposals shall be opened at the same venue on May 26, 2004 at 10:00 o'clock a.m.

The BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any required formality in the bids received, and accept such offer most advantageous to the government.

The bidder shall bear all costs in the preparation of their bids and government shall in no case be responsible or liable for their costs regardless of the outcome of the bidding process.

(Sgd.) EDILBERTO R. FELICIANO
Deputy Administrator
Chairman, BAC-Infrastructure

(PDI - March 10 & 24, 2004)



PORORO POINT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION
A Subsidiary of Bases Conversion Development Authority

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **PORORO POINT MANAGEMENT CORPORATION (PPMC)** is inviting all interested parties with at least three (3) years of continuous business operation, of which at least two (2) years are in providing security services to Philippine government corporations, to apply for eligibility and to submit bid, if eligible, to provide security services.

The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) of P5,015,863.148 shall come from PPMC corporate funds.

Eligibility Forms shall be made available to interested firms on the date and place mentioned below upon submission of Letter of Intent and payment of a non-refundable amount of one thousand pesos (P1,000.00)

Schedule of Procurement Activities:

Activity	Dates	Time	Place
Submission of Letter of Intent and Issuance of Eligibility Form	March 24, 2004	During Office Hours	PPMC, Pennsylvania Ave., San Fernando City, La Union
Deadline for submission of Eligibility Statement	March 31, 2004	12:00 noon	PPMC, Pennsylvania Ave., San Fernando City, La Union
Issuance of TOR and other Proposal Documents and Site Inspection	April 20, 2004	2:00 p.m.	PPMC, Pennsylvania Ave., San Fernando City, La Union
Pre-Bid Conference	April 23, 2004	2:00 p.m.	Pre-Departure Area, Terminal Building, San Fernando Airport, Canaoay, San Fernando City, La Union
Submission and Opening of Bids	May 5, 2004	2:00 p.m.	Pre-Departure Area, Terminal Building, San Fernando Airport, Canaoay, San Fernando City, La Union

Applications for Eligibility shall be evaluated using "PASS/FAIL" criteria, thus, only eligible firms shall be invited to participate in the bidding. All bids shall be evaluated in accordance with R.A. 9184 and its IRR.

PPMC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or required formality thereto, and award the contract to any bidder whose proposal, as determined by the BAC, is the most advantageous to the Corporation.

Should you need any further information or clarification regarding the required services, you may contact Major Joel G. Canngat at Telephone No. (072) 888-5955.

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People, Events & Products

Wyeth shares 'giftedness' in Baguio

AMIDST the romantic ambience and the fresh scent of pines, the summer capital of the Philippines became the venue for renewed hope for the future as Wyeth Philippines recently brought the beauty of giftedness to the Abano Square.

Hundreds visited the Wyeth ProGifted Exhibit, which showcased the wonderful works and talents of the Filipino gifted children. Violinists Paulina Gutierrez, Christian Tan and Joseph Valdez and cellist Pocholo Gutierrez rendered beautiful music for the audience, playing their youthful, dexterous fingers on the strings.

Young painter Romen Rosete gained admiration from both established and aspiring artists. Dom Bulan's poetry lulled romanticists. Visitors lauded mathematician Lean Leviste and young astronomer James Flores. Baguio locals got to know and admired the skills and talents of the other Filipino gifted children such as 10-year-old chess champions Wesley So and Gabby Layugan, and 6-year-old super intelligent Raffy Sayoc after reading their profiles at the Wyeth ProGifted Exhibit.

The Wyeth ProGifted Exhibit Tour is part of Wyeth Philippines' support

to the Filipino gifted children. For 10 years, Wyeth is ProGifted, continuously providing nourishment for the gifted as well as nurturing and creating awareness on their exceptional gifts. The country has already recognized these exceptional children way back when the former administration proclaimed in October 19, 1999 that the 4th week of November is celebrated as the National Week for the Gifted and Talented. From then on, this momentous event is carried on with Wyeth ardently supporting the campaign to provide optimum care and importance to the gifted.



THE FRAMER AWARDS PAINTING

The Framers Frame Shop recently held its 27th anniversary raffle with paintings by three known Filipino artists as prizes. Shown (2nd from right) is 1st prize winner Ludy Aragones with husband Paul receiving an oil painting on canvas titled 'Old

House Series IV' by Larry Memije. Also shown are Romy and Didit Young, owners of The Framers Frame Shop, awarding the prize. The Framers is at Aguirre Avenue, BF Homes Paranaque with branches in Alabang, Makati and Baguio.



GMA HONORS 2003 TOYM AWARDEES

The Search for the Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) 2003 has finally come full circle as President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (shown center), together with the Philippine Jaycees Inc (JCI), the Gerry Roxas Foundation and the TOYM Foundation conferred recently the awardees at the Ceremonial Hall, Malacanang Palace. Shown are the TOYM awardees (from left) Ricardo Jose Quintos II, medicine-vascular surgery, John Ong, community service, Kenneth Cobonpue, arts/design, Luis Gatmaitan, literature, Lyndon Tan, agriculture-food technology, Victor Emmanuel Nadera Jr, literature,

Orville Bondoc, animal breeding-genetics, John Patrick Gregorio, tourism management, Francisco Enrique Bernardo III, entrepreneurship, and Allan Benedict Bernardo, education. These outstanding young men now join the ranks of nearly 400 individuals such as Ninoy Aquino, Lea Salonga, Jose Mari Chan, Napoleon Abueva, Manny Pangilinan, Loren Legarda, Lance Gokongwei and Jaime Zobel de Ayala. The Search for TOYM 2003 is sponsored by Equitable PCIBank, PLDT, Phinma and the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

Citibank cardholders win Asia Miles

FOUR Citibank Cathay Pacific Visa cardholders can now go off on their dream vacations after winning 25,000 Asia Miles each in Citibank's recently concluded Asia Miles promotion.

The lucky cardholders are Leah B. Amo from Ormoc City, Benedicto A. Banaag from Cebu City, Meldoy Cu, Coyukiat from Quezon City and Josephine Abrigonda Lasquite of Sta. Cruz, Manila. With 25,000 Asia Miles each, the winners can enjoy a roundtrip ticket to Hong Kong or redeem exciting items-from gifts to hotel accommodations to free updates.

The preferred credit card of travelers in the region, Citibank Cathay Pacific Visa gives you the fastest way to earn Asia Miles by simply charging purchases to your credit card.

Unlike traditional frequent flyer programs where members only earn free flights from flying, all expenses on Citibank Cathay Pacific Visa can be converted into Asia Miles. Every P45 spent earns one Asia Mile, while Gold cardholders can earn two Asia Miles for every P45 spent overseas.

Aside from free travel rewards, Citibank Cathay Pacific Visa also affords cardholders global acceptance in over 29 million establishments and access to cash advances from 600,000 ATMs worldwide.

Asia Miles, on the other hand, is Cathay Pacific's frequent flyer program that offers 850 destinations via 13 airline partners including Aer Lingus, American Airlines, British Airways, Sabena, Swissair and more. It has also tied up with a number of hotels, car rental services, and even telecommunications firms, giving members an array of opportunities to earn additional miles even on the ground.

Protect your kidneys from diabetes

MAJORITY of people with diabetes will develop severe kidney disease that could lead to kidney failure. Kidney failure is a situation in which the organs fail to filter the blood. This leads the person in need of either a kidney transplant or dialysis treatment. Diabetes is the single most common cause of end-stage renal disease (ESRD) in adults, accounting for 35-40 percent of new cases each year.

High blood glucose damages the kidneys' filters. When the kidneys are damaged, the protein leaks out of the kidneys into the urine. Damaged kidneys do not do a good job of cleaning out waste and extra fluids. Not enough waste and fluids go out of the body as urine. Instead, they build up in the blood.

An early sign of kidney damage is when your kidneys leak small amounts of a protein called albumin into the urine. With more damage, the kidneys leak more and more protein, a problem medically known as proteinuria. When this medical condition gets worse, it leads to diabetic nephropathy or kidney failure.

The onset and progression of diabetic nephropathy can be slowed by intensive management of diabetes, specifically keeping blood glucose down. It is best to control glucose by addressing insulin resistance and beta-cell dysfunction, which are the underlying cause of diabetes. Insulin resistance is a condition wherein the body fails to respond to the circulating insulin effectively while beta-cell dysfunction is characterized by pancreas' inability to produce adequate insulin.

To reach blood sugar levels recommended by experts, many people with type 2 diabetes will need to

take a combination of therapies that treat diabetes in different ways. According to the UK Prospective Diabetes Study (UKPDS), approximately half of all patients on monotherapy will require multiple drugs to control the disease within three years.

The combination of rosiglitazone and metformin has been proven to target insulin resistance and beta-cell dysfunction. As an adjunct to diet and exercise, the combination of rosiglitazone and metformin is indicated to improve blood sugar control in people with type 2 diabetes who are already treated with rosiglitazone and metformin as separate tablets or who are not adequately controlled on metformin alone.

The beneficial effect of early combination therapy is seen in the Empire (Escalation of Metformin versus Initiation of Rosiglitazone Early) study comparing the effects of metformin and the early addition of rosiglitazone to metformin. Results of the study showed that more patients reached their targeted blood sugar levels with the early addition of rosiglitazone to metformin than those who are receiving the maximum dose of metformin alone.

Kidney disease and diabetes are serious problems that spare no country and no racial, ethnic or age group. According to the International Diabetes Foundation, more than 194 million people now live with diabetes worldwide, and by 2025 more than 333 million will have the disease if steps are not taken to prevent it. Patients with type 2 diabetes should consult their doctors to learn more about new treatments that could potentially put a stop on the disease progression.



NEW ARISTOCRAT AT ROBINSONS PLACE MANILA

The Aristocrat Restaurant (since 1936 the Philippines' pride) recently held its soft opening at the 4th level of the Pedro Gil wing of the Robinsons Place Manila. Now on its 68th year, the restaurant is situated in one of the country's most promising malls frequented by shoppers and foreigners in the heart of the tourist belt. The event was graced by (from left) Ma. Lourdes R. Pabalan, treasurer, Dr. Arturo C. Reyes and wife, Aristocrat Bakeshop

general manager Della R. Zalardriaga and Raymond A. Reyes, president and chief operating officer with wife Mercedes. The Aristocrat Restaurant legacy of Alex and Engracia Reyes lives from generation to generation. The emergence of another Aristocrat outlet is in line with the company's thrust of expanding its restaurant through branch expansion and franchising programs to be launched 2nd half of 2004.

CDCM alumni homecoming in July

THE CEBU Doctors' College of Medicine (CDCM) will be holding its Alumni Homecoming and Post-Graduate Course from July 7 to 11. CDCM's first graduates from the Class of 1981 to the most recent Class of 2004 are invited to the event. The event's organizing committee headed by Dr. Peter Mancao and assisted by Dr. Yong Larrazabal, is putting together several activities composed of sports events, social gatherings, medical missions and a postgraduate course with US-based

alumni as speakers. The theme of the post-graduate course will be "Current Trends in the Practice of Medicine" and will include topics on Forensic Medicine, Pediatric Gastroenterology, Cardiology and Bariatric Surgery. CDCM alumni can call the Secretariat (Dr. Dundee Estallilla) at (32) 254-9246 or text 0919-4898251 or e-mail cdcmalumni@cdc-cdm.edu. Visit the CDCM Alumni 2004 website at <http://groups.msn.com/CDCMalumni2004>.

Product FILES

Options Unlimited a bit in body kits

FOR CONSISTENTLY dressing up winning designs in transport shows year after year without fail, Options Unlimited still remains the leading manufacturer of quality fiberglass auto body kits in the country. The company has just recently introduced the latest high-performance designs of spoilers, fender flairs, side skirts, front support, step boards, audio racks, headlight covers, and strut bars all made from durable, imported quality fiberglass that can be fitted to all types of cars and SUVs.

Options Unlimited believes that quality begins with great designs as this has been proven countless times by consistently winning best in body kit design categories in the different car show events held every year. That's why once again, Options Unlimited



unveils yet another array of this year's latest winning designs for auto body kits. For more information, just visit Options Unlimited at 47 D-G Araneta Avenue, Quezon City or call 713-5168 or 714-2635.



METROBANK DONATES TO FIRE VICTIMS

Almost 1000 families affected in a fire that razed four 'barangays' in Pasay and Makati October 2003 got much needed help from the private sector and their local government units. Metrobank Foundation donated P100,000 worth of goods such as food and medicines for the affected families. Shown is Metrobank

Foundation executive vice president Elvira Ong Chan and Metrobank senior manager and assistant area supervisor Marilyn Yao (white shirt) donating the goods to the beneficiaries at the relief center. They were assisted by the barangay captains and representatives from the local governments of Pasay and Makati.

PSLIS 3-day seminar

THE PHILIPPINE Society of Librarians and Information Specialists (PSLIS) will hold a 3-day seminar-workshop on "Developing/Enhancing the Cataloging and Indexing Skills of Librarians, Non-Librarians and other Library Personnel/Information Specialists" on March 17 to 19 at the 12th Floor Social Hall, Security and Exchange Commission Building, Edsa, Mandaluyong City. For inquiries/reservations call Beth at 932-1295, Joven at 527-9672, Lynn at 724-1994 or Medy 897-8808 locals 329/330.

San Miguel cooking demo

COOK up a food business. Turn your hobby into cash as San Miguel Pure Foods Culinary Center brings you "Livelihood, Livell-food!". Let culinary expert Sylvia Reynoso-Gala teach special recipes fit for a food business while Charlie Dobles of the successful Spoofs Unlimited share tips on effectively starting up and managing a business on March 13, Saturday, from 1 to 4:30 p.m. at the San Miguel head office cafeteria, 40 San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong (across SM Megamall). Just bring any two wrappers of Magnolia Quickmelt, Magnolia Cream Cheese, Magnolia Cheezee, Magnolia Gold Butter, Dari Crème, Classic Margarine, Baker's Best Margarine, PureFoods Chunkee Corned Beef, or PureFoods Chick N' Tasty Chicken Hotdog. For inquiries, call 671-9876 locals 2771, 402, 404 and 405, and look for Rachelle or Rowena.

Wastex & Cleantex

THE WASTEX & Cleantex 2004 organized by Edutech Trade & Service Corp will be held from March 11 to 13 at the Philippine Trade Training Center. The two-pronged event will gather top waste and sanitation management professionals from different countries, industries, cities, municipalities, large and small companies, and the government and general public. The Wastex Conference features San Mig Corp's Bottle to Bottle PET Recycling Program and Nestle Philippines' Greening the Supply Chain Program. Partners and cooperation agencies include DENR, the head of the National Solid Waste Management Commission, Solid Waste Management Association of the Philippines, Philippine Business for Environment, League of Municipalities of the Philippines, and Meeting Points International Inc. For inquiries, call Edutech at 651-1749, 451-0946 or 0920-2119559.

BUSINESS

Napocor gets P700M for Makban rehab

By Abigail L. Ho

NATIONAL Power Corp. has signed a Y1.49-billion (around P700-million) agreement with Japan's Mitsubishi Corp. for equipment supply and rehabilitation works at the Mak-Ban Geothermal Power Plant complex in Laguna.

The recently signed agreement will serve as a supplement to the already existing rehabilitation works currently being done at the five-plant complex.

Under the supplemental agreement, Mitsubishi will provide a steam supply system, steam turbine and auxiliary equipment, a gas extraction system, cooling water systems, a generator and excitation system, a 480-volt motor control system and a direct current (DC) system.

The Japanese firm will likewise do the cleaning and repair of the Mak-Ban complex's cooling tower basin.

Funding for these additional rehabilitation works would come from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, which had provided a Y3.38-billion (around P1.47 billion) loan for rehabilitation works on Units 1-4 of the power plant complex.

The rehabilitation on the Mak-Ban complex, when completed, will mean an additional 15 to 20 years to the geothermal plant's useful life. The project also aims to boost the rated capacity of four of its units from 55 megawatts (MW) each to 63 MW.

As of January, the project was already 44.53-percent complete. Mitsubishi that month shipped Unit 3's turbine rotor to Japan for repair.

The project is part of President Macapagal-Arroyo's priority projects for her term. It involves the rehabilitation of the Mak-Ban complex's Units 1-4, which were completed in various dates from 1979 to 1984.

Law granting extra pay to judiciary worries DOF

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance has called for prudence in the implementation of a law that grants special allowance to members of the judiciary, raising the importance of controlled spending in view of the government's huge fiscal gap.

The DOF said that while it was supporting the granting of the special allowance, the government should be reminded that the move would require adjustments in the government's revenue-allocation program.

"As a matter of policy, the DOF does not normally support proposals that earmark government revenues. However, as an exception and in support of a stronger judicial sys-

tem, we are amenable to the proposal to use collections from legal fees to fund the salary increase," said Finance Undersecretary Inocencio Ferrer Jr. in a position paper.

The DOF recommended the crafting of a mechanism that would ensure that funds generated from legal fees would also cover for other expenses in the judiciary, such as maintenance and repair of office equipment, despite the passage of the law.

The law on the rationalization of the compensation of selected members of the judiciary granted a special allowance to each covered employee, equivalent to 25 percent of basic salary.

The law, which was enacted late last year, is expected to gob-

ble up legal fees collected by the government.

Citing data from the Bureau of Treasury, the DOF said fees and other charges remitted by the judiciary in 2002 amounted to only P189.9 million.

Raising doubts on the sufficiency of funds for the purpose of granting allowance to members of the judiciary, the DOF said the branch of the government should ensure proper spending of the budget.

However, the DOF said it agreed that granting additional compensation to members of the judiciary has its benefits.

"The Department of Finance believes that the objective of the bill to increase the income of the members of the judiciary so that

they will be at par with their private sector counterparts would serve as a good incentive to boost morale and enhance efficiency and productivity and thus result in better disposal of cases, continuous training and tighter imposition of discipline," said Finance Undersecretary Inocencio Ferrer Jr. in a position paper.

This law was first proposed to raise the level of efficiency in the judiciary. The slow movement of court cases was often blamed for the delays in the implementation of some business operations.

Investors, especially foreigners, had often cited the country's judiciary as one of the risk factors they consider whether or not to do business in the country.

Government picks underwriters for \$500-M bond float

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday said the national government's plan to borrow \$500 million from the global bond market would give it more flexibility now that domestic interest rates were rising.

In a press briefing, BSP Governor Rafael Buenaventura said the

Monetary Board had already given the government the leeway to borrow as much as it could from the global bond market.

"The opportunity presented itself. Spreads in regional markets are tightening and the domestic market is pushing the rates up," Buenaventura said.

In last Monday's treasury bills

auction, the Bureau of Treasury had to reject all bids as the market was driving the rates up.

"This new borrowing gives them flexibility in their funding source," he said.

It was reported that the Philippine government had mandated HSBC, Credit Suisse First Boston (CSFB) and UBS to underwrite at

least \$500 million worth of sovereign bonds.

"The amount, the timing and the tenor will be up to the Department of Finance," Buenaventura said.

The BSP chief said the national government would likely go for a 10-year tenor.

After the government's pre-funding initiatives last year, it still

has to cover about \$680 million worth of requirements this year.

In the meantime, Buenaventura said the BSP would let the national government and state-owned National Power Corp. complete their own foreign financing requirements first.

Asked whether it would likely return to the global bond market

before the elections, he said: "We will come in if the opportunity presents itself. All we need is about \$500 million."

"If inflows start coming in the second half we might not even have to borrow," he said.

Another option, he said, would be to raise funds through a club loan.

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15 minutes with the Sugababes

Text and photos by Maui V. Reyes
2bU! Correspondent

SHELLING out urban pop laced with hip hop beats, the Sugababes have proven that not all UK girl bands have to turn in their midriffs after an album or two.

After all, when you record an album at 16 years old, you've still got a long way to go. That's exactly how Keisha Buchanan,

The all-girl band with a half-Filipina member on being role models and coping with fame

Mutya Buena and Heidi Range feel about their band, Sugababes. After original member Siobhan Donaghy left the group in 2001 (she was getting more into rock music, while the other two still preferred garage and hip hop), Heidi was brought in and the perfect formula for a hit album was concocted.

"I think we've gained more than we lost because Heidi has a different flavor vocally, and she brings something new to the group," Keisha shares.

And now, with a new album, "Three," which displays a clearly more mature sound, this band is ready to wow both the mainstream and underground scene with their latest single "Hole in the Head."

2bU! got to spend 15 minutes with the band while in Singapore for the MTV Asia Awards.

What do your parents think of your success and your music?

Keisha (K): They've been really really good, considering that we're always on the road. They really trust our management, the record company people. They really trust everyone, and they're really supportive, which is really nice.

You've been role models for a lot of young girls. Do you feel a sense of pressure?

K: I think it is really hard. Sometimes you'd like to do what you want to do and not have to listen to what anyone else has to say. But it is really hard to know the fact that the next day you'll be in the newspapers.

And you're not really thinking when you're outside, that people look up to you. It's kind of like me and my little sisters, they copy everything I do, and I see where this whole role model thing is. But I guess at the end of the day you just have to explain to everyone that, "Look, I know I'm a role model, but what I do

15 MINUTES/ C3



"MUTYA changes her hair color like she changes underwear," says Heidi (left), here with Keisha and Mutya.

For Pete's sake, let this Brazilian stay here forever

Latino Pedro Henriquez, the new face of Oxygen, rightly feels at home in Manila

STORY ON PAGE C3

Paces Philippine Academic Center for Enrichment and Self-Actualization

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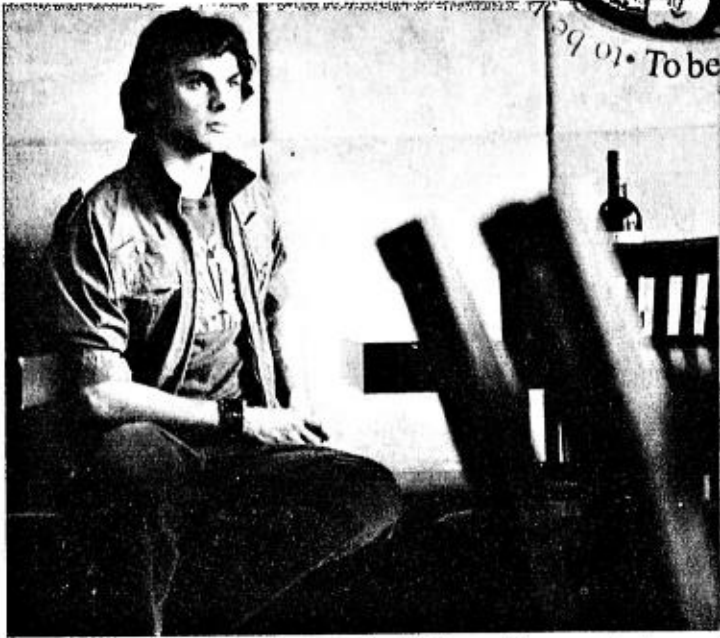
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UTILITARIAN jacket over vintage shirt in olive and boot-cut denim with epaulettes detail



WHITE stretch woven shirt and slim-fit denim



BLACK stretch woven shirt and brushed twill pants with epaulettes detail

LOCATION: BUDDHA BAR
 HAIR AND MAKEUP: LALA FLORES
 STYLING: LZ PUNZALAN
 THANKS TO: AYIE BARRIOS, CARLO FUENTES, KIT ARINES

OXYGEN model Pedro Henriquez in a gray sweatshirt and regular straight denim

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For Pete's sake, let this Brazilian stay here forever

Text by Jason Doplito
 2bU Correspondent
 Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

QUITE a lot of things spring to mind when you think of Brazil: samba, carnival, football, skimpy swimwear, the Jesus Christ monument in Rio de Janeiro, Lola at the Copacabana, and maybe brooding guys with sun-kissed skin, curly hair and deep-set eyes. The type who would drive hours just to spend a few minutes with you.

Or maybe not.

"Nah, I got that from my father," says Pedro Henriquez when asked if his acts of chivalry were anything Brazilian. He admits to being old-fashioned when it comes to romance and says it has more to do with his upbringing than with his country of origin.

The 20-year-old Sao Paulo native is in the country to do more than just open doors and resurrect the art of romance. Two years ago, he jumpstarted his modeling career by moving to New York, a city where dreamers can dream bigger. Hoping to grab a piece of the international market, he now finds himself in Asia for the first time, jazzing up our shores in particular, with his bone structure. His job? As Oxygen's latest endorser.

In its recently launched ad campaign, Wear to Party, the clothing brand introduces club wear geared toward more sophisticated young professionals. If its recent TV spot featuring an underwater party scene is any indication, then Oxygen does seem ready to be

different and show a spunkier, sexier attitude—qualities it apparently found in Pedro.

Comfortable chaos

Despite being far away from his family, Pedro says the similarities between our country and his make him comfortable enough to enjoy his stay here. He particularly mentioned "the chaos of the city," and one would immediately picture scenes of Edsa and Quiapo.

"It's important to be away from your family for a while," he later says, explaining that it would help a person in finding his true self. For now, he is sure that modeling is his true passion, aside from his love of nature.

The environmental engineering student has been modeling since he was six years old. "I'm comfortable to say that I'm not really that good-looking," Pedro later says. For a moment he philosophizes and stresses that one shouldn't think too much about what other people say, that it's even more important to harness one's capabilities.

Pressed on about the first time he knew he was attractive, he admitted that his mom was his No. 1 fan. "She was the first one who ever told me I was good-looking." Indeed, he proves that the maternal duty to boost a child's self-esteem is a worldwide phenomenon.

Asked about the number of times he looks at himself in the mirror, Pedro says he tries to keep it to one. "What the mirror does is reflect all the good and bad, so I'd rather focus on what I have best than to look in the mirror all day and see what I have that's not good."

For a moment, you are hit by the reality of what he's saying. But then you hear girls nearby, swooning over Pedro's gorgeousness. And then you start to think if you should even look at the mirror at all.



RED jersey soccer shirt paired with utilitarian boot-cut denim



15 minutes

From page C1

is what I do."

Heidi (H): We met a few fans who basically... like, Mutya's got a lot of piercings, and out of all of us, she's the one who gets copied the most.

Mutya (M): It's weird, they're all 15, or 16, and I'm like, "I'm afraid your mom will hate me!" It's weird, but I take it as a compliment to a certain extent.

H: And you get self-conscious. Like, I had this tattoo done in L.A. (shows us a cross on her wrist), and I was in a picture with my arm turned over, and everyone was like, "Ohmy-god, she's got a cross on her hand!" and apparently [having an upside-down cross] was Satanic, and the first thing I thought of was, "the fans!"

So I had "God's Grace" written underneath, so if it was upside down like that it wouldn't send out the wrong message. I'm a very religious person, and I'm definitely not the anti-Christ.

Starting out young, did you ever feel like you missed out on anything?

M: There were a lot of things that we missed out on when we were younger because we were in the studio. It worked out anyway. I literally go out Monday to Sunday in the UK anyway, and it doesn't really matter what time, because everything in the UK doesn't start until midnight. Well, mine doesn't. I pretty much caught up with anything I've missed. But what I miss the most is my family. But I'm enjoying myself.

H: And I think when you want to be at the top of what you do, you'll miss out on things anyway. I mean, we've got the opportunity to do things others can't do.

What direction do you want to send this album, "Three," to?

K: I don't think we're trying to go to a specific direction, but obviously this album is more mature than "Angels," and there was a two-year gap in between, and probably the next one will be more mature even.

H: And we've added a lot of producers as well. The first one we had two producers, and the second one we added three, and they bring their own individual sounds. In fact the producers need us just the way we need them. They bring the beat, and if we like it, we just write to whatever beat they give us. So that's how the formula basically gets together.

When did you realize that you've made it?

K: I don't think we've even made it. Not to the point where we want to be, anyway.

H: I think you don't think about it until you're not doing it anymore.

M: Oh, we've still got a long way to go.

How do you girls keep it together—always touring and always being around each other?

H: I think it helps to have three people in the band. Like, yesterday, Mutya was ill, so she threw up and me and Keisha were just, go lie down, and we'll just cover for you.

K: For me and Mutya, in particular, I think we've definitely learned to be able to share and be able to respect each other and appreciate each other a lot more. I know for a fact that I'm a better person now than I was about three years ago, when the lineup was different. We didn't know about communication or anything about that, but when you actually learn that and realize that at the end of the day, people around you can leave at any moment, so the only people we get attached to is each other.

H: We stick together as a band. That's the most important thing.

Do you want to break into the United States?

K: We'd love to break into America, but we're not trying to be like Destiny's Child. We're entirely different from them. I think if you're good at something, then you should stick to that. It would be weird trying to be like an American R&B group and going (snaps her fingers). Being black, I know (laughs). But growing up, we always wanted to break into America, that's our dream. We'd see Whitney Houston and Mariah Carey... and we didn't even know Britain that much, but we knew [the American industry].

Mutya, you're half-Filipino. Do you listen to any Filipino music?

M: Um, not really. I know a few of the songs, but I don't understand it. I can speak it, but learn a song, I can sing it, but I wouldn't know what I was saying.

There aren't many multi-racial bands out there. Do you ever think that being in one has helped you sell records?

H: We don't really think about it, like, Keisha's black, I'm white, Mutya's mixed. We never really thought about it.

K: It's reflected in a good way or a bad way. I would never know if our being a multi-racial band has helped sell more records or not, we'll never know, but I do know that it has opened a lot of doors for others. We know for a fact that when people look at Sugababes, they listen to the music and not just look at us.

What are the perks of being famous?

H: I don't like the label "famous." I'd say Michael Jackson's famous. We don't get hunted down or anything.

M: I wouldn't want to be that famous.

Any embarrassing moments onstage?

H: Pulled up a guy onstage, knocked over the mic, chipped my front teeth. For the rest of the show I was thinking, "I have a chip on my tooth."

M: There have been times when the mic isn't on. Or somehow we forget the words. I like to make up my words, too. There was a time when my belt dropped, and I tried holding up my trousers.

What was it like working with Linda Perry?

K: She's mad but she's a lovely woman. She's crazy.



"[THE BEST beauty tip I know] is you run a washcloth under a hot tap and put it on your face. That steams it," shares Keisha, with Heidi.

Win signed Sugababes CDs!

WE KNOW, we've been so generous at giving away signed CDs. Win one of three signed Sugababes CDs if you get to answer this question correctly: How many albums has Sugababes released since they first broke into the music scene? Send your answers to contest2bu@inquirer.com.ph on or before March 15, 12 nn.

H: She's like, girls, we can't get started, we can't write anything, until you have a bit of liquor. We had a tequila bowl and were taking tequila shots. She basically had us on the floor and sat us down on beanbags and mics on the floor and just sing whatever we wanted to sing.

K: She wanted us to get drunk. And be honest. I fell asleep and woke up the next day and they've recorded a whole song. All of a sudden, Mutya played the drums. And the song lasted 10 minutes and they couldn't even remember what it was about.

M: We could have been a rock group!

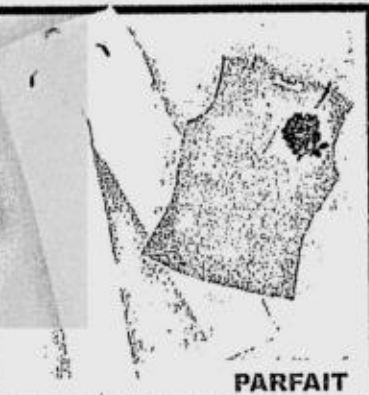


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The Curbside Prophet in the flesh

By Angela V. Ignacio
2bU! Correspondent

WHAT do an oyster and an iced double espresso with caramel have in common?

Well, they're what Jason Mraz might have been if he weren't born human. Stumped? Read on.

Smack dab in the middle of the press' attention, the 26-year-old singer/songwriter from Mechanicsville, Virginia looks totally at ease, with none of the lofty, detached air some artists with his success might adopt.

He really looks at you and listens carefully while you're talking, making you feel like you're the only two people in the room. In his comfy jeans-and-shirt attire (and, of course, his omnipresent hat), he looks nothing more than your average Joe, but with a little more wit and charisma. And a hefty dash of naughtiness to boot.

For those who have been living under a rock, Jason Mraz is the dude behind such radio hits as "Sleep All Day," "The Remedy (I Won't Worry)" and "You and I Both."

His scat-meets-pop-meets-everything style, together with his clever, jaunty lyrics, pushed him into the spotlight, and has kept him there ever since.

Keeping it real

From the countryside dreamer to a full-fledged music icon, Jason hasn't lost contact with his humble roots as a sort of "curbside prophet."

Why the nick, you ask? It actually refers to a person who stands on the corner and preaches, sings or performs, and Jason says he's done a little bit of that in his early days.

"Those days had meaning for me, so I try to use those experiences as the beginning of my story," he explains.

It's refreshing to know that his stellar success hasn't diminished his modesty, nor his



"I'd be iced coffee 'cause I'm cool, then a little bit of caramel 'cause I'm sweet and a double espresso shot 'cause I like to think I'm strong."

flair for intimate interaction with his audience. He still prefers playing in smaller venues, but he finds larger audiences a fun sort of challenge.

"We still try to make eye contact, talking to the crowd, asking questions, [accepting] requests," he says. Basically, it's all about retaining that Java Joe's element: "We really do our best to keep it real."

Clearly, Jason is one guy who loves what he does. According to him, sense of humor is important in keeping himself connected to the audience. He's not afraid to bash or make fun of himself, and doesn't scrimp on sexual innuendoes, either.

Even food items can't escape his mischievous nature. Caffeine addicts might be interested to know what kind of coffee he'd be: "I'd be iced coffee 'cause I'm cool, then a little bit of caramel 'cause I'm sweet and a double espresso shot 'cause I like to think I'm strong," he declares, mouth upturned in a sly grin.

How about an appetizer? He says he would probably be an oyster. "Yeah, it's an aphrodisi-

Jason Mraz came, he sang, he conquered—and left fans clamoring for more

ac... I'm this kind of slimy pervert"—the audience laughs—"but it makes you wonder if there's really a pearl inside."

Well, I don't know about pearls, but he sure is one gem of an artist.

I couldn't resist teasing him about his uncanny resemblance to actor Hugh Grant.

"I wonder if [he] gets that," he deadpans. "I wonder if people say to him, 'You know, you look just like Jason Mraz!' It's funny... but if it allows me to meet girls, it's fine," he adds coyly, ever the good-natured Casanova.

Girls, girls, girls

By now, it's obvious that women play a huge part in Jason's life. He counts Björk, Ella Fitzgerald and Sade as his muses ("Björk is the only woman in my life right now," he sighs).

He also has a huge amount of respect for female pop stars. "What I like about them," he says, "is that the songs they eventually get to sing, even though they didn't write them, they still sing it like they own it. They're great performers."

He admits to being a Christina Aguilera fan, "cause she's diiiiiirrrrry. Nothing wrong with that!" he adds quickly.

Jason has done tours with the likes of Kelly Clarkson, Michelle Branch, Hilary Duff and Jewel, which he enjoyed immensely.

"I would love to do a show with Dido, and Jewel again, too... Their music has a kind of storytelling [effect] to it," he says.

In fact, he plans to record an album of songs that were originally done by women. A tribute to girl power, perhaps?

When he is asked which song he would sing if he had joined "American Idol," Jason chooses "It's Not Unusual" by Tom Jones, because it's his karaoke song.

Naturally, we yelled for a demo, to which he reluctantly obliged.

"This is horrible!" he exclaims, but he soon

gets lost in his element and blows us away. Now we know why "Domino" is his karaoke nickname.

Smelly hat

The "Domino" effect didn't stop there. In his concert at the Aliw Theater, female fans nearly knocked each other down trying to get near the stage. Apparently, they just couldn't get enough of him and his... hat.

"I can give you my heart, my songs, my dance moves, but you still want my smelly hat?" he said melodramatically, and the audience lapped it up.

He didn't give it away, though, to the fans' disappointment. "Let me break it in first, I just got it recently!" he said.

In that big venue, he still managed to keep that element of intimate interaction, and the audience simply loved him for it. It even prompted him to exclaim, "There's a whole lotta love in this place!"

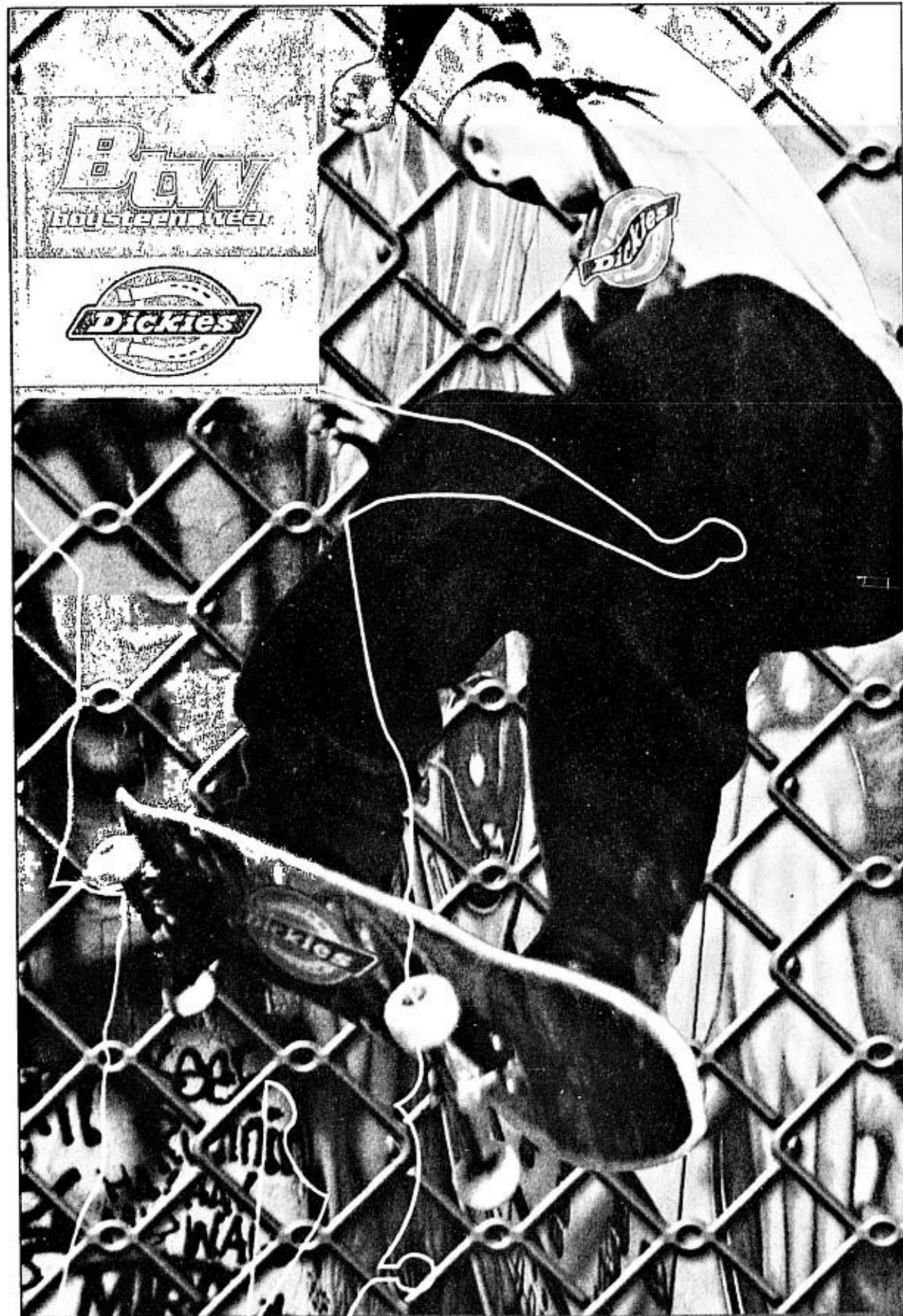
Jason scattered and breezed his way through the whole two hours, singing both aired and unaired tracks from his LP "Waiting for My Rocket to Come," plus a couple or so teasers from his next album.

He also surprised older audience members by belting out his version of Hall and Oates' '80s hit, "I Can't Go for That," turning up his collar and swaying a la Daryl Hall.

He never ran out of gimmicks or jokes, even coming out wearing roller skates for the finale. In short, the show was nothing less than fun and fabulous.

In his all-too-brief stay (he had to leave the morning after for his Japan tour), Jason Mraz stuck true to his credo: "Try to win 'em over, one fan at a time." His Filipino fans are his for the taking.

E-mail the author at aoshi_no_miko@hotmail.com



Win VIP tickets to Incubus concert

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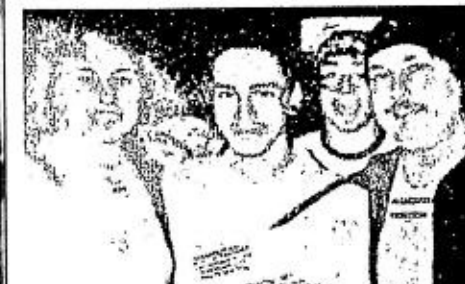
She sent us a long letter, complete with links to pictures and her website.

She once designed an Incubus shirt and after posting a picture of it on a message board, other fans clamored for their own. She ended up exchanging shirts for other Incubus goodies.

She was able to ask a fan to hand-deliver a gift from her to Brandon Boyd, backstage at one of their shows. The next day, Brandon supposedly mentioned receiving a gift from the Philippines in one of his radio interviews.

One fan sent her a signed poster of Incubus in exchange for shirts and beads.

Grace was even offering to send us a power point presentation showcasing her love for the band.



BRANDON Boyd (center) holds Grace's gift backstage at a concert



GRACE'S collection of Incubus goodies

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Winners should present their ID when claiming tickets at the Jag Jeans boutique in Glorietta 1. Look for Jessie Coloma from Monday to Saturday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m.

Tickets for the Incubus concert are still available at all SM Ticketnet outlets and Jag Jeans boutiques at Glorietta 1, Robinsons Ermita and Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall. Ticket prices are P1,950, and standing at P950 and P550. Call 9115555 or 8171158.

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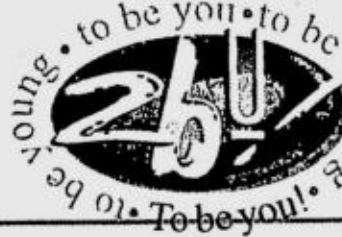
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LIFESTYLE

Continuing the Endless

"The Sandman: Endless Nights"

By Neil Gaiman

Art by P. Craig Russell, Milo Manara, Miguelanxo Prado, Barron Storey, Dave McKean, Bill Sienkiewicz, Glenn Fabry and Frank Quitely
DC Comics, New York, 2003, 160 pages

By Ruel S. De Vera

APPARENTLY, Neil Gaiman's day job remains the stuff of dreams. Though the British writer has diversified into ambitious novels ("American Gods") and eerie children's books ("Coraline"), it is Gaiman's work in comic books that has made him a fan favorite around the world.

He got most of that adulation while writing the seminal DC/Vertigo series "The Sandman," which ran for 75 issues, from 1989 to 1995.

A magically intoxicating mix of myth and mischief, "The Sandman" revolved around the life of Dream, also called Morpheus, the King of Stories. The pale, brooding Dream spoke in poetic word balloons and seemed, for the most part, to be quite aloof from humanity and other such mundane creatures.

The series also discussed the comings and goings of Dream's family: the silent Destiny, the charming Death, the dangerous Desire, the patient Despair, the loopy Delirium and the missing Destruction. Together, they are the Endless—and the perfect family they are not.

Yet Gaiman fans have been craving for this dysfunctional family ever since Gaiman killed off Morpheus in the storyarc called "The Wake." The entire Sandman epic can thus be discovered via the 10 trade paperbacks collecting the Vertigo series.

Continuation

The hardcover-only "The Sandman: Endless Nights" marks the first actual continuation of sorts to those 10 volumes. A gathering of new Gaiman tales of the Endless and illustrated by a sterling lineup of artists, "Endless Nights" provides die-hard Sandman fans with that much-desired Gaiman fix.

Like many things in the realm of the Endless, "Endless Nights" is a mixed bag, just as, when we wake from slumber, we remember sweet dreams, scary nightmares and, sometimes, inexplicable visions.

Some of the tales in "Endless Nights" are surprisingly straightforward, such as the "Death" story (with art by P. Craig Russell), which tackles those who would elude Death's touch in a pocket of time, and the "Destruction" piece (illustrated by Glenn Fabry of "Preacher" fame), which brings readers to a strange island where researchers are digging up deadly items from the future.

Frank Quitely ("New X-Men") substitutes mood for action in the self-explanatory "Destiny" piece. Meanwhile, Italian art icon Milo Manara harnesses the erotic power of the gripping "Desire" story.

Other pieces are so unconventional and experimental, they verge on the bizarrely cryptic. Beautifully and scarily rendered by Barron Storey and longtime Sandman cover artist Dave McKean, the "Despair" story—if you can call it that—defies easy explanation and reading.

Similarly, the rather unique rescue attempt in "Delirium" (with art by the inimitable Bill Sienkiewicz) is almost impossible to read at the beginning, but comes on strongly in the end. It is, technically, the most current of the stories, featuring the new Dream, named Daniel.

Best story

Yet the best story in "Endless Nights" is the one about Dream. Brought to life with fiery flourish by the Spaniard Miguelanxo Prado, "Dream" is, in many ways, a missing tale of the Endless.

This was the Endless before family feuds, when there was a different Despair, Destruction was still merry around and Delirium was still known as Delight.

Long-time Sandman readers will be shocked to find the many incongruous details in the early part of the story (the chummy Dream and Desire, the cold and matter-of-fact Death).

Yet as it reads on, long-missing pieces in the story of the Endless falls crisply into place. Prado's art flows over the glossy pages like fluid flame, capturing the scale and significance of this celestial gathering.

In many ways, "Dream" is a love story, but one that doesn't necessarily work out the way it is often expected to. Desire is many things, but Desire is also cruel.

While his writing is uniformly great in "Endless Nights," Gaiman shows off his best in "Dream," as he pieces together much of what make the Endless who they are.

It also ties in squarely with the Endless' involved history and even with DC Comics continuity (Oa being a landmark planet in Green Lantern territory). Readers, as always, will root for Dream to be happy and yet, when the tragic turn of events happens, readers already

know but don't have to ask why.

This is Dream as many of his readers remember him, even if this story is supposed to take place before the first issue of the "Sandman" series. This is Dream as only Gaiman can write him.

Beyond the expected crowd-pleasing element of this action, it becomes clear that Gaiman, when he wishes it, truly has complete mastery over his most popular creations. Additionally, the idea of who is actually telling this particular story is such a patently delicious Gaiman idea.

It has often been mentioned how "The Sandman" is the best comic book series for people who don't like reading comic books. While that insight is somewhat debatable with all the great titles now out there, it cannot be denied that there is something truly powerful and inherently compelling about the Endless, that Gaiman has tapped into something bigger than we think, providing mainstream readers with a taste of the electrically eccentric, even for comic book readers.

Strong and vexing

While "Endless" still falls far short of Gaiman's best work, such as the unique, unbroken storyline of "Season of Mists" and fantastic collections of separate tales such as "Dream Country,"



Comic book master Neil Gaiman brings back The Sandman and his unique family in the hypnotic 'Endless Nights'

it remains a strong if sometimes vexing read. "The Sandman: Endless Nights" bears that elusive yet inescapable feel with aplomb and distinctive poetic grace. While the book will be appreciated fully only by those familiar with the entire Sandman pantheon, this collection has been crafted with such mindful detail and creative storytelling that, beyond the quibbles, readers will be reminded of why Neil Gaiman's distinctive ways of telling bedtime stories is still the best thing with which to tuck one in on moonless, windswept nights.

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THANKS TO LIZA VENGCO,
 AMOR MACLANG, RODA
 GRACE PATRICIO, MAY
 OBLIGACION, GABBY TEJADA
 AND THE STAFF OF CRYSTAL
 CARAT GLORIETTA, GUESS
 GLORIETTA, TIME DEPOT
 SHANGRI-LA, 1:15 AND BLUSH

These watches make us wish
 we had more than just two wrists

2BU! FASHION FREAKS

Wristwatched to the nines

By Pam Pastor, Jason Doplito,
 Maui Reyes, Niño Mark Sablan
 Photos by Randy Hormillosa

AFTER hibernating in the land of dull and no-shopping, the Fashion Freaks are back.

Last week, we invaded your favorite malls in search of the most eye-catching timepieces.

Our discoveries will leave you itching to shop. There are watches

with changing dials, watches that can answer your questions, watches that can blind you with their sparkle.

We celebrated our finds with pink lemonade, raising our glasses for a toast.

Thank God we're not living in the age of sundials.

If you want the Fashion Freaks to visit your stores or see your wares, e-mail us at thefashionfreaks@yahoo.com



ULTRA-GIRLY. P2,200. Available at Blush inside 7th on Sixth, G/F, Glorietta 2



NEON LOVE. Nike Presto Cee Digital, P3600. Also comes in a lot of other colors. Available at Crystal Carat, G/F, Glorietta 3



MAKE Elle Woods proud. Diesel watch, P7,500. If pink is not your color, don't fret. This watch also comes in other colors like white, green and black. Available at Crystal Carat, G/F, Glorietta 3



A SWOOSH in time. Nike Presto Cee Analog, P3,600. Also comes in a lot of other colors. Available at Crystal Carat, G/F, Glorietta 3



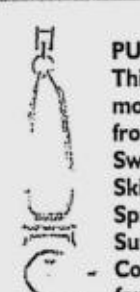
FORM AND FUNCTION. Wristband watch, P599. Available at 1:15, 2/F, Glorietta 3



RAINBOW RAD. This Fossil watch comes in other combinations, P4,590. Fossil watches are available at Fossil Shops, Timestudio branches and Crystal Carat, G/F, Glorietta 3



BLUE BEAUTY. This Guess watch is studded with Swarovski crystals, P4,045. Available at Guess branches



PURITY. This model is from Swatch Skin's Spring Summer Collection for 2004, P3,700. Available at Swatch and Gift Gate boutiques



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STYLISH TILES. DKNY watch, P4,800. Also comes in other colors. Available at Crystal Carat, G/F, Glorietta 3



MAGIC 8 ball for your wrist. This watch will tell you more than just the time. Ask a yes-or-no question, tap the face and your Swatch will reply. This watch from the Swatch Touch collection goes for P2,950. Available at Swatch and Gift Gate boutiques



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FRENCH LOVER. This is one of the models from the new Swatch Touch collection, P2,950. Love it? We say oui, oui. Available at Swatch and Gift Gate boutiques



FANTASTIC FRANK. P999. Available at 1:15, 2/F, Glorietta 3



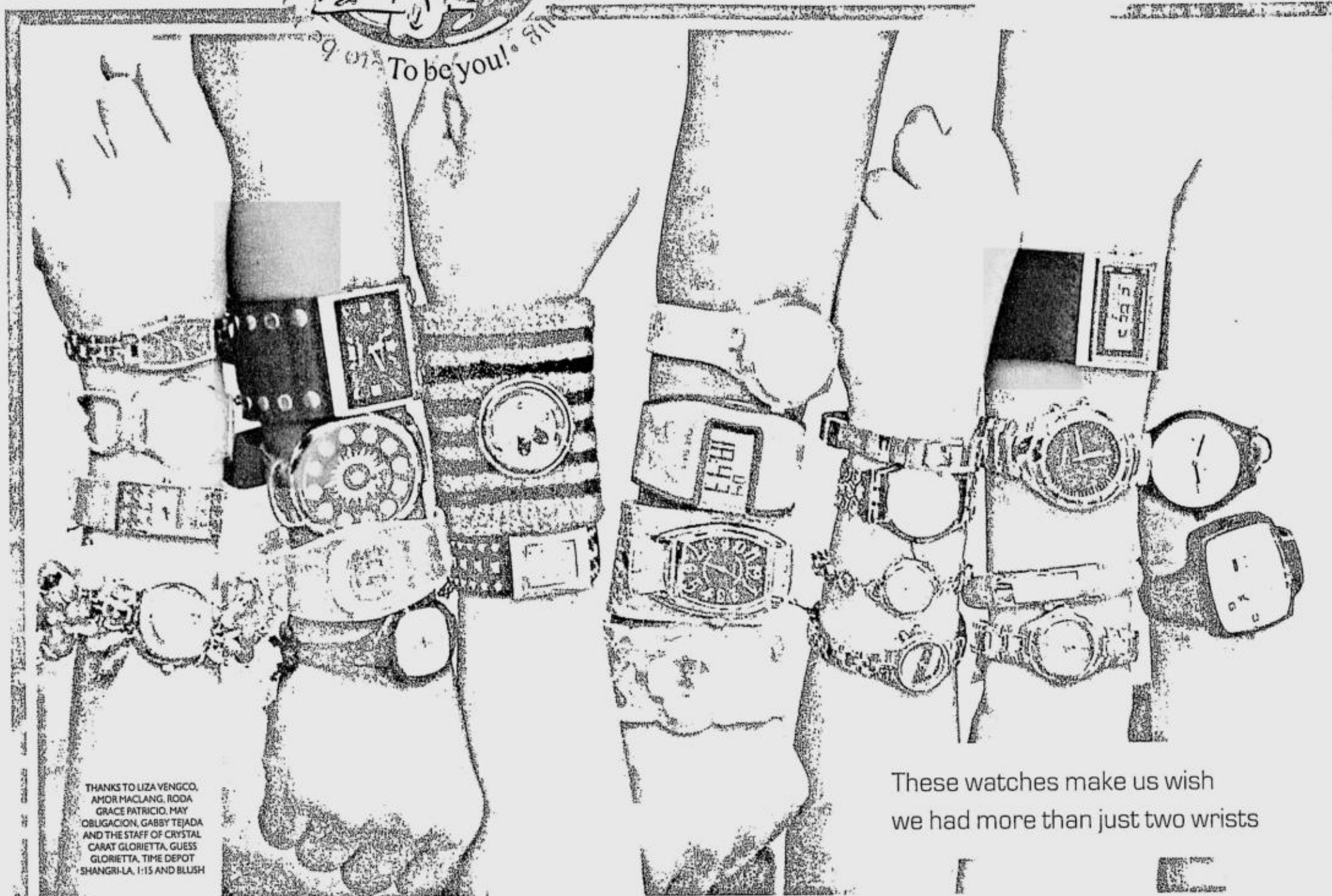
PURPLE POWER. This Naf Naf watch also comes in other colors. P3,495. Available at Time Depot branches



SILVER LINKS. Naf Naf watch with charm, P2,995. Also comes in other colors. Available at Time Depot branches



REACT. These models from Kenneth Cole's Reaction line arrived in the stores on the same day of our shoot. Lucky us. Prices available upon request. Available at Crystal Carat, G/F, Glorietta 3



THANKS TO LIZA YENGCO, AMOR MACLANG, RODA GRACE PATRICIO, MAY OBLUGACION, GABBY TEJADA AND THE STAFF OF CRYSTAL CARAT GLORIETTA, GUESS GLORIETTA, TIME DEPOT SHANGRI-LA, I-15 AND BLUSH

These watches make us wish we had more than just two wrists

2BU! FASHION FREAKS

Swatche

By Pam Pastor, Jason Doplito, Maui Reyes, Niño Mark Sablan
Photos by Randy Hormillosa

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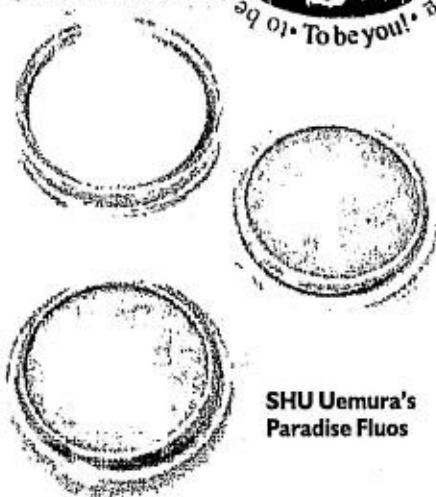
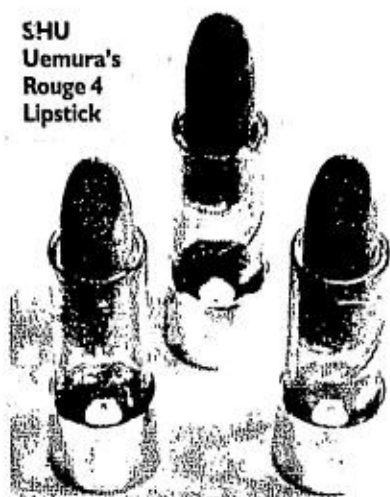
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SHU Uemura's Rouge 4 Lipstick



SHU Uemura's Paradise Fluoos

Makeup inspired by colorful flowers and exotic fruits

I'VE BEEN spending the past few weekends arranging my first honest-to-goodness out-of-town trip for summer '04—calling travel agents, booking flights, finding the perfect resort—but I had yet to feel the summer vibe.

Maybe it was the stress of the near-impossible task of taking a trip on Holy Week or the unexpected rainy days that came mid-February, but I was feeling just about as dull as a cloudy sky—until I met Shu Uemura's Tina Tinio for lunch.

Not to take credit away from Tina's ability to turn something as ordinary and typical as a lunch date into a mini-party, of course, but I got my first genuine taste of summer in the goodie bag she had for me.

Colors as vibrant as the rainbow and shades yummier than popsicles and ice cream peeked from inside the bag and gave me a dose of summer cheer. Hello, paradise! Or should I say, Paradise?

Makeup master Shu Uemura has managed to outdo himself yet again with his Spring-Summer Mode Makeup Collection for 2004. Aptly called Paradise, the collection features vivid hues balanced with sheer textures, all inspired by colorful tropical flowers and exotic fruits.

Gorgeous pinks, energy-infused oranges and cool blues complete that summer look. Yes, you can outshine the sun and turn into



Lora Gabol

summer's muse with Paradise.

Luster Bronze Powder. If you wish to shimmer like a beach goddess, I suggest you bring this pot of golden bronze with you wherever you choose to head.

If baking on Boracay's shores is on your itinerary this summer, a fine dusting of this sheer powder will give that tan a golden edge. City dwellers who can't get as much sun need not fret,

as this magic dust instantly warms up any skin tone without looking harsh or fake.

I especially like how it instantly defines shoulders when carefully applied on the area, and gives the illusion of, uh, major cleavage when brushed on your chest.

For toned and leaner-looking gams, mix a bit of the powder with a light lotion or body oil, and apply right down the center of each leg. Works like a charm—or at least, like two hours a day on the treadmill.

Pressed Eye Shadow.

I'm normally a beige shadow lover, but these eye shadows from the Paradise collection proved too gorgeous to resist.

Bold but not crayola-like, these four limited-edition shades are essential for brightening up any face. The effect you get is so striking, it doesn't take much to complete a makeup look with these colors on your lids.

Papaya (yellow) and Mango (orange) perfectly complement *morena* complexions because these shades mimic the golden

MAKEUP/D4

He doesn't have time for her

DEAR Mark and Sep,

I have a boyfriend who is so busy and has really no time for me. We've been going steady for more than a month. But we always argue regarding his time for me.

I've tried my best to understand him. He's a seaman and right now, he's trying to apply for an overseas job so he can work again. I understand that he also needs to go back to his work after a long rest, but how about us? How can this relationship go on when we hardly see each other and seldom talk to one another?

When I call him or text him, he gets angry and says that I don't concentrate on my work. What should I do? Is it wrong to ask for a little time from him to pick me up at the office? Is it wrong to ask for some of his time?

MARTI

You have no choice but to accept the undeniable truths that he doesn't have time for you, and that he's not willing to at least squeeze you in his supposedly packed sked.

It's not wrong to call or send "Daisy Siete" quotes to your lover's cell. It's not evil to want him to pick you up at work. It's not a sin to ask for some of his time.

What's wrong is he's ignoring you and shooing you away like some bothersome butterfly. What's wrong is you keep up with this busy bee and your quasi-relationship.

Face it: He will never have tick-tocks for you because you are not important to him. He will never have the hour to take you out and propose, the minute to make love with you or even the second to appreciate your strategically-positioned moles.

Your "relationship" will surely crumble once he hops back on the ship. I look into my crystal ball and I see nothing. Zero, nada, zip, zilch. No future for you guys.

So go out and look for someone who has

the time to understand and appreciate your calls and "Daisy Siete" quotes.

MARK

I was about to give a lecture on how you guys should be in tune already with each other's personalities until I realized that you've been on for just a little more than a month.

Do you know the guy whom you call your

boyfriend?

As far as my limited knowledge in relationships can tell me, it should still be a "honeymoon stage" between you two—never enough time together, never enough load for phone calls and text messages, etcetera.

With your boyfriend's attitude, however, he's sounding like a guy who's been married for 10 years already (no offense to decade-long-happily-married people).

And that's not a good thing. With his line of work promising you less opportunities to be with him, you should start thinking about whether the relationship is worthy enough to be saved and to be worked on, when even the slightest request for affection becomes a critique of your work ethic and your personality in general.

Is it wrong to ask for a little bit of his time? Heck, no. You shouldn't even ask that question. The more important thing to ask is, does he love you? And are you willing to put up with the aggravation he's been giving you?

Look for the answers, and if you come up with a "No" to either or both questions, then it's time to look for someone who can love and appreciate you more.

SEPTEMBER

E-mail the writers at markandsep@yahoo.com. Chatroom is inviting letter senders to indicate if they want their e-mail address printed so wannabe Marks and Seps out there can get in touch with problematic letter senders and send in their comments and advice.

You can outshine the sun and turn into summer's muse with Shu Uemura's Paradis collection

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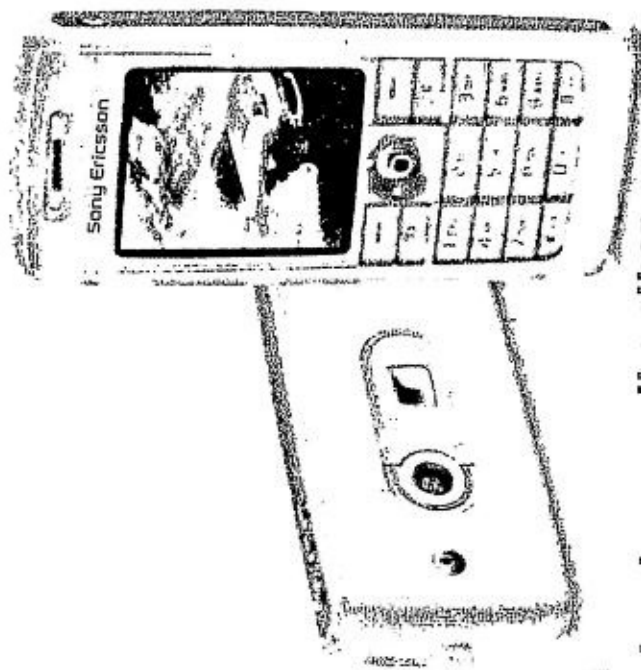
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D4

Makeup inspired by . . .

From page D3

undertones of tanned skin. Lotus (pink) and Palm (turquoise) are perfect for fair-skinned femmes who want to boost color on their pale faces.

Don't hesitate to experiment, though, as all four shades can be worn by everyone! For day, a layer on your peepers is enough to grab attention (Papaya and Mango are especially subtle). At night, be daring and mix and match shades, or layer them on for a more vivid effect.

Paradise Fluos. I was a huge fan of the Bon-bon Fluos when they first came out (they remain mainstays in my kit), and am currently obsessed with the limited-edition Paradise Fluos from Paradis.

These pots of versatile color can be worn on your eyes, cheeks and anywhere you want for an instant boost. Pink Hibiscus is even prettier than the flower and looks great on cheeks if you want the baby-doll look. Bird of Paradise (orange) defines cheekbones well—just use sparingly, especially if you're on the fair side.

Water Lily is just pure magic. Clean white with iridescent specks, this shade is best for highlighting the top of your cheekbones, the bridge of your nose, your brow bones and the inner corners of your eyes.

Again, when working with these Fluos, the possibilities are endless! Forget the rules and create your signature summer face.

Rouge 4 Lipstick. Lippie lovers have three new reasons to celebrate! The Rouge 4 pickings for Paradis are so wearable, it wouldn't take a trial-and-error session to pick the right shade for you.

Formulated especially for Asian skin tones, 321 (Salmon Pink), 351 (Reddish pink) and 335 (Rose pink) look pretty on any complexion. They blend well into the natural color of your lips, so you get the I-just-bit-my-lip effect and will never look overly made up.

Then again, that's what summer is about: fresh, effortless beauty. Just the thing you get from Paradis.

For candle lovers, there are also limited-edition floating candles in wonderful floral scents. Great for outdoor parties, luaus or those moments when you just want to lay back and relax.

Visit the Shu Uemura counters at Rustan's Makati and Rustan's Shangri-La Plaza. Shu's beauty consultants will be more than delighted to help you pick your best shades. Paradis is now available at the counters, so grab your own stash before stocks run out.

E-mail the author at pdi_vanity_tara@hotmail.com

BE AHEAD.